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LIFE AND TIMES
OF
NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI.





CHARLES VIII OF FRANCE

from the bust in the National Museum at Florence

The Life and Times
OF
Niccolo Machiavelli

BY
PROFESSOR PASQUALE VILLARI
Author of "The Life and Times of Savonarola," &c.

TRANSLATED BY
MADAME LINDA VILLARI

A NEW EDITION
(AUGMENTED BY THE AUTHOR. REVISED BY THE TRANSLATOR)

ILLUSTRATED

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THE LIFE AND TIMES
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CHAPTER XIV.

The battle of Ravenna—The French retreat—Dangers of the Republic—Machiavelli organizes the defence—Ordinance of the mounted militia—The Spaniards capture and pillage Prato—Riot in Florence in favour of the Medici—The Gonfalonier Soderini is deposed and leaves the city.

(1512.)



IN 1512 the French forces continued to pour into Italy, under the command of the very old but still renowned Captain G. J. Trivulzio, and of Gaston de Foix. The latter, barely twenty-three years of age, son of the King's sister and brother to the wife of Ferdinand the Catholic, now filled the post of governor of Milan, and was soon to astound the world by his military genius and valour. Trivulzio had already driven the Papal troops from the Duchy of Ferrara and restored the Bentivoglio to Bologna ; but the army was not yet in a condition to take the field, and he was therefore awaiting reinforcements from France, where preparations were going on slowly. The King, with his usual parsimony, refused to increase the pay of the Swiss, who now demanded forty instead of thirty thousand ducats per annum, and not obtaining them, prepared a

descent into Italy to the help of the Pope. By means of his agents, his Holiness had for some time been labouring to that end, and as early as the October of 1511, on hearing that the King boasted of still having the Swiss in his service, he had answered that his Majesty "lied in his throat, and would certainly never have them."¹ In fact, the King had deceived himself, for, aware that the Swiss lacked both cavalry and guns, he thought they would neither dare to separate from him nor act on their own account. They, on the contrary, esteeming themselves the best infantry in the world, were persuaded that France, whose infantry was her weak point, could do nothing without their aid, much less venture to meet them in the open field.

Ten thousand Swiss then came down from the mountains, and waited the arrival of others to move against the French. This event made so great a stir in Italy, that Cardinal Soderini, who had been feigning illness to avoid obeying the papal summons to Rome, now hurried there, whereupon the Pope exclaimed "that the Swiss were good physicians for the French sickness, since they had completely cured Monsignore of Volterra."² But Gaston de Foix knew how to keep them at bay, by temporizing measures; and they retreated, although already sixteen thousand strong, without having done anything, and without any one comprehending the motive of their retreat. Possibly they had been once more bribed by French gold. In this contingency the Florentines used their best endeavours to remain neutral. To French demands for help, they replied that having already forwarded the promised three hundred men-at-arms, it was impossible for them to do more; and they despatched Messer Francesco Guicciardini as ambassador to Spain, since, although still under the legal age of thirty, he had already a high reputation for skill. But the instructions given to him were not definite enough to conciliate the Confederates; and thus Florence was still exposed to the serious danger of being equally detested by all parties.³

On the one side there were the French, now in much augmented numbers, and with a considerable force of German infantry; on the other were ranged Spain, Venice, and the Pope, who penned fiery

¹ Letter from Bernardo da Bibbiena to Cardinal dei Medici, Legate in Romagna, 19th of October; 1511, Desjardins, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. pp. 542, 543.

² Another letter from Bernardo da Bibbiena to Cardinal dei Medici, of 18th December, 1511.

³ Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," vol. v. p. 64.

letters to Cardinal dei Medici, declaring that he could not understand why they had not begun to fight, why they had not already attacked Bologna. The Confederates were near Imola with an army numbering, between Spanish and Papal troops, 16,000 foot and 2,400 horse, commanded by the Viceroy Raimondo de Cardona, Pedro Navarro, Prospero and Marcantonio Colonna, and others. The French had garrisoned Bologna with no more than 2,000 German foot soldiers and 200 lances; so the enemy began the attack, and by means of mines laid by Navarro, who was a very renowned engineer, blew up a piece of the wall. But the fragment in its fall again closed the breach, in an apparently miraculous manner. And almost at the same time Gaston de Foix, who had already reinforced the garrison with another thousand foot soldiers and 180 lances, marched his whole army into the city, on the 4th of February. This army, according to Guicciardini, amounted to 1,300 lances, and 14,000 infantry, Italian, Spanish, and German.¹ On learning this, the Confederates raised the siege and withdrew. They were not pursued, for Gaston, knowing that the Venetians had taken possession of Brescia, immediately started in that direction on the 9th February, leaving only 300 lances and 4,000 infantry within the walls of Bologna.² By the way he fell in with a detachment of the Venetian army, and routed it; he then attacked Brescia, where the castle was still holding out for him. The 19th he captured the city, after a fierce assault, and a most obstinate defence on the part of the Venetian force. This army although consisting of 8,000 foot soldiers, 500 men-at-arms, and 800 light horse, was almost entirely annihilated. Some reckon 8,000, others as many as 14,000 dead, between soldiers and citizens. Unfortunate Brescia was subjected to about a whole week of continuous sack and pillage, for Gaston, whose cruelty was as great as his courage, had given full license to his soldiery. At the end of that period his host, which had suffered very little, was loaded with spoil, and, full of daring, and being remarchalled under its banners, was again marched towards Romagna. At a time when armies were handled with the utmost slowness, Gaston de Foix had accomplished positive

¹ "Storia d'Italia," vol. v. pp. 74-5. This is the total of the forces introduced into the city at different times. In fact, Buonaccorsi, whom Guicciardini continually copies, says, that before entering Bologna, Gaston had 800 lances and 10,000 men. "Diario," p. 166. Thus, counting those already in the city, we arrive at about the same total recorded by Guicciardini.

² Buonaccorsi says: 250 lances and 2,000 infantry.

miracle. In the space of fifteen days he had raised the siege of Bologna repulsed a detachment of the enemy on the march, attacked and captured Brescia, and was now ready for greater enterprises. On reaching Finale, he found fresh reinforcements, increasing his forces, French, Italian, and German, to a total of 1,500 lances, 1,000 archers, 19,000 infantry, without including the artillery, which nearly all belonged to the Duke of Ferrara. The Spaniards numbered 14,000 lances and men-at-arms, 1,500 *ginetes*, or mounted spearmen, 13,500 infantry, besides the artillery, and fifty scythed chariots, engines of war of a novel kind.¹

The two armies remained encamped for some time, for the confederate troops shrank from an encounter with the enemy's superior forces. But Gaston de Foix had no time to lose, for the English were threatening attack upon France, and that shifty ally of Louis XII., the Emperor, was threatening to recall his 6,000 Germans. So, in order to compel his retreating enemy to take the field, the young commander, after capturing several strongholds, assaulted Ravenna. And this was too important a city to be given up to him without the most desperate resistance. In fact Marcantonio Colonna had undertaken its defence, and been solemnly assured that the whole force of the Confederates should come to his aid, were the city in danger. Gaston de Foix took up his position between the rivers Ronco and Montone, which streams almost meet near the walls of Ravenna. His guns planted, he opened a breach and gave the signal for assault; but the defence was so desperate, that after a loss of three hundred foot soldiers and a few men-at-arms, with as many more wounded, he was compelled to retreat within his entrenchments. The following day the citizens sent to the French camp to negotiate terms of surrender, without the knowledge of Marcantonio Colonna, who, in the certainty of receiving succour, was preparing to continue the defence.² Indeed, before long, the army of the Confederates came in sight, and the Duke of Nemours and Gaston de Foix immediately gave the signal of attack. Their eagerness for a pitched battle was now hotter than ever, in consequence of the arrival of a despatch from the

¹ These are the figures given by Francesco Pandolfini, Florentine Orator to Gaston de Foix (*Desjardins, op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 581 and fol.). Those given by Buonaccorsi and by Guicciardini, in his "*Storia d'Italia*," are somewhat different, and not even concordant with each other; while, again, different figures are given by Jacopo Guicciardini in one of his letters from Florence, to his brother Francesco, then in Spain. See Guicciardini, "*Opere Inedite*," vol. vi. p. 36 and fol.

² Guicciardini, "*Storia d'Italia*," vol. v. p. 28.

Emperor, recalling his troops, the which news could only be kept concealed for the moment.

The army of the Confederates marched between the two torrents until near Forlì, and then, crossing the Ronco, halted at three miles from Ravenna. At this point, having the river on their left, they worked day and night, in order, according to Pedro Navarro's plan, to dig a trench protecting them on the right and in front, but leaving an open space, about twelve yards in breadth, by which they could push forward their cavalry, and then, if required, the entire army, headed by the artillery and the fifty scythed cars (*carri falcati*) mentioned above. These cars had been invented by Navarro in imitation of ancient engines of war : they were small and low, and armed with a huge double spear, with a space of about a yard and a half between its forks. In the centre was a long lance, protruding at the same angle, and dealing its blows before those of the spears ; each of these cars was also provided with a small cannon. They were easily manœuvred, and considered a wonderful invention, but proved of very little service, and were quickly superseded by artillery.¹

The French left Ives d'Alègre stationed near Ravenna with 400 lances, and having thrown a bridge over the Ronco, also crossed that river. This took place on the 11th of April, 1512 : thus the great battle was fought upon Easter Day. They formed in a crescent, with the artillery under the Duke of Ferrara planted on their right wing, so that their guns played on the Spanish cavalry, led by Fabrizio Colonna and posted near the river, to the left of their own army.

When the fire began, and Colonna perceived that his men were unable to deploy, and decimated by the enemy's shots, he was furious against Navarro for having thus wedged them within the camp, and declared him a traitor urged by jealousy towards himself. At last, no longer able to restrain his impatience, he gave the word of command to his men and sallied from the entrenchments. And as the whole army followed him, this was the real beginning of a battle more terrible than any other in the memory of man : it was in short the first great battle of modern times. The Confederates' cavalry having already, while motionless, suffered so severely from the enemy's fire, could ill withstand the

¹ Letter of Jacopo Guicciardini to his brother. Guicciardini, "Opere Inedite," vol. vi. p. 41. Report of the Ambassador Francesco Pandolfini on the battle of Ravenna, *Désjardins, op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 584.

onslaught of the French men-at-arms, so renowned for dash and valour, and was speedily routed by them, leaving Fabrizio Colonna himself and the Marquis of Pescara prisoners in their hands. The Spanish infantry justified its high reputation, by the wonderful energy with which it repulsed the enemy's attacks, but at last it gave way, borne down by the French men-at-arms, the military genius of their leaders, and also by the overwhelming superiority of numbers. In a short time the whole Spanish army was in retreat; but in such good order and steady form, that Gaston de Foix, enraged by the spectacle of beaten foes retreating almost at the pace of conquerors, determined to rout them by a last furious charge, and led forward his cavalry in person. Unfortunately his horse fell wounded under him, and he perished from fifteen or sixteen wounds, all in his face and chest. He was barely twenty-three years of age, and in three months had won enduring renown; a general almost before he was a soldier. Therefore his death in the very hour of victory was an irreparable calamity for France. The Confederates retreated with much coolness, although thoroughly defeated along the whole line. All their baggage waggons, their flags, and artillery, remained in the enemy's hands, together with a large number of prisoners, including Fabrizio Colonna, Pedro Navarro, the Marquises of Palude, Bitonto, Pescara, and Cardinal dei Medici, the Papal Legate. The list of dead was, as usual, reckoned at different figures, some writers fixing the number at 10,000, some even at 20,000. It may be reckoned in round numbers that the Confederate loss was 12,000, the French only 4,000. Nevertheless the latter, besides losing several captains like Ives d'Alègre and his son, had to lament the death of Gaston de Foix, and this, as they soon discovered, cost them more than a defeat. However, for a few days they enjoyed the fruits of their victory: Ravenna was taken and pillaged, and Imola, Forlì, and Cesena speedily surrendered to them.¹

The news of the French successes, and of the capitulated cities, threw the Pope into the greatest consternation, so that he longed

¹ Guicciardini, "*Storia d'Italia*," vol. v. pp. 93-113, bk. x. ch. iv. This author says that 10,000 men were killed in the battle of Ravenna (p. 110). On the other hand, Buonaccorsi ("*Diario*," p. 174) reckons the killed at 4,000 French and 12,000 Confederates. Piero Guicciardini, writing to his son in Spain, on the 30th of April, 1512, says that the total loss amounted to 16,000, of whom one-third were French. Guicciardini, "*Opere Inedite*," vol. vi. p. 47. Jacopo, on the contrary, wrote to his brother (*ibidem*, p. 36 and fol.) that according to some there were 12,000 dead, of whom a third were French, and according to others, 20,000.

to make peace at any price. But the Spaniards persuaded him to wait, and on seeing the different turn things were taking, he feigned still to desire peace, the better to outwit his enemies, who were, indeed, quickly reduced to desperate straits. The Emperor again sent orders of recall to his troops; the Swiss were at last really on the march to the aid of the Confederates, and were soon in Italy 20,000 strong; while England was sending soldiers to Spain to attack France. In short, so entirely had public feeling changed, that all were sounding the praises of the Empire, and Cardinal dei Medici, being carried a prisoner to Lombardy, was daily surrounded by a crowd of French soldiers begging him for absolution. Shortly afterwards he regained his liberty by a sudden rescue. The Confederates joined the Swiss in pursuit of the French, who, to use the words of a contemporary writer, "were flying like mist before the wind."¹ In a short space their Italian possessions had dwindled to the towns of Brescia, Crema, and Legnago, the fortress and lighthouse of Genoa and the castle of Milan. At the same time Parma, Piacenza, Bologna and other places in Romagna surrendered to the Pope, who assumed possession of them puffed with vainglory and mighty hopes. It seemed all a dream.

The Florentines were now at a sad pass. Faithful to the last to the French alliance, at the expiration of the treaty binding them to provide 300 lances, they hastened to renew it for five years longer, pledging themselves to contribute 400. But meanwhile the 300 men already with the French were being plundered. King Louis XII. was not at all satisfied with the conduct of the Florentines, almost asserting that they had betrayed him, whereas they were considered his most faithful friends by the Confederates, who, although at odds on most points, were unanimous in determining to no longer tolerate the government of Soderini in Florence. Yet they all dragged the Republic in different directions, until it knew not what course to take. The Pope sent his Datary, Lorenzo Pucci, to invite the Republic to join the League

Francesco Pandolfini, Florentine Ambassador to Gaston de Foix, reports, like Buonaccorsi, that the French had 4,000 dead, the Spaniards, 12,000. Desjardins, "*Négociations*," &c., vol. ii. p. 581. It is very probable that Buonaccorsi took his figures from Pandolfini's official despatch.

¹ Francesco Vettori, "*Sommario della Storia d'Italia dal 1511 al 1527*," p. 287, published in the "*Archivio Storico Italiano*," Appendix xxii. Guicciardini, vol. v. p. 143 and fol.

with the obligation of furnishing a contingent to help in the total expulsion of the French from Italy. The Emperor's representative, Cardinal Gurgense, to whom Giovan Vittorio Soderini had been sent as envoy, counselled the Florentines to refuse all such proposals, suggesting that they should send money to his master instead, in order to gain his friendship and protection. And although the Florentines had already given gold to obtain that friendship upon which a price was again set, they would have consented to any sacrifice to secure peace; had they not been well aware that to satisfy the claims of the distant Emperor would by no means avail to free them from Spaniards or from their still nearer neighbour the Pope.

Accordingly they could arrive at no decision, and Cardinal Gurgense joined the other Confederate representatives at Mantua, where it was resolved to assist the Medici, who, without wasting time in words, immediately paid down 10,000 ducats, and promised much heavier sums to the army that should escort them back to their native city. Giuliano dei Medici, who carried on the negotiations in his own name and that of his brother, Cardinal Giovanni, was listened to as though he were already the representative of a power, while no one paid attention or addressed a syllable to the ambassador, Giovan Vittorio Soderini, who sat there unable to make any counter-proposal in the name of the Republic. It had been already decided to reinstate Massimiliano Sforza, son of Lodovico il Moro, in the Dukedom of Milan, to expel the Gonfalonier Soderini from Florence and recall the Medici; already for this purpose the Viceroy had joined his army in Bologna, and yet neither the Florentines nor their Ambassador had the least inkling of these proceedings.

Soderini felt that the ground was giving way under his feet and was day by day reduced to more manifest impotence. For he saw himself forsaken by the most influential men in Florence, who openly favoured the Medici, were in continual correspondence with them and were plotting their return. All these men were moved by their old-standing jealousy of Soderini, who, as they thought, had done wrong to leave them on one side. They did not desire the positive destruction of the Republic, but they hoped to hold its government in their own grasp, and become, as it were, guardians of the Medici (who professed themselves content to return as private citizens); while insisting, in order to keep them in subjection, on the aid of the people, who were always in favour

of a free form of government. The Gonfalonier lacked the energy for a vigorous and desperate resistance, but neither did he give up all for lost. He listened attentively to the words of the Spanish Orators, who gave him to understand that their monarch would never consent to yield excessive power to the Pope, much less to resign Florence into the hands of a Cardinal like Giovanni dei Medici, the actual head of the family. He also lent ear to the Pope, who sent him word that he hated the Spaniards, meant to drive them from Italy and did not intend to give power to Cardinal dei Medici, their dependent. In this way Soderini was tricked on all sides and left in suspense.¹ Added to this, Machiavelli had inspired him with his own blind trust in the Militia Ordinance so soon to be put to a decisive test, and the hopes they both built on this trial were unfortunately doomed to complete overthrow.

In the last months of 1511 and the first of 1512, Machiavelli, leaving diplomacy on one side, had devoted his whole energy to the task of placing the Republic in a state of defence. There is a paper of his that must have been written about this period, "Counsels on the choice of a Commander of the Infantry,"² and in this he recommends that the Eighty should elect a good captain for the militia, since without one, the troops could not stand trial with success. He suggested that the leader chosen should be Jacopo Savelli,³ a man held in high esteem by A. Giacomini and Niccolò Capponi, and superior to envy; but unfortunately his suggestion does not seem to have been adopted, and the militia remained without a commander.⁴ In December, 1512, the Secretary had travelled through Tuscan Romagna raising levies for the

¹ Vettori, "Sommario," &c., pp. 289, 290.

² "Consulto per l'elezione del comandante delle fanterie" ("Opere," vol. iv. p. 455).

³ In every edition of the "Opere" we find only "*il Signor Jacopo*," without any surname. The Florentine edition of the "Opere Minori" (Le Monnier, 1852), gives in a note the supposition, likewise repeated in the Florentine edition of the entire works of Machiavelli, published in 1857, that the man referred to was Jacopo Savelli. The P. M. edition of the "Opere" merely gives a note with the words "*Jacopo Corso*," without adding more (vol. vi. p. 358). But it is impossible to think that the man proposed by Machiavelli was any other than Jacopo Savelli, for both Christian and surname are to be found in the old copy of the "Consulto," preserved in a Codex of the Barberini Library in Rome. See Cod. 47, lviii., at p. 152.

⁴ We find only the veteran Luca Savelli at the head of the men-at-arms.

cavalry that was shortly to be organized ;¹ and then returned to Florence to continue his labours for that purpose.² Finally, in March, 1512, a decree was passed, first in the Council of Eighty and then in the Great Council, instituting the mounted militia, with a statute composed by himself. It ran to this effect : " Seeing the great utility of the Infantry Ordinance, desiring to ensure the safety of the present government and liberty amid the dangers to which they are now exposed, the Nine are hereby empowered to enlist under our banners for the entire year 1512, no less than 500 light horse, armed either with crossbows or matchlocks at the pleasure of the men ; ten per cent. of the number may be armed with lances." In time of peace these soldiers were to have a fixed allowance for the keep of their horses, to be afterwards deducted from the considerably higher pay that they would receive in time of war, as the other light horse engaged by the Commune.³ Also, this horse militia was to be composed of men enlisted in Florentine territory ; yet even at this juncture, when the country was in danger, no one dared to invite any inhabitant of a large city, and much less of Florence, to join the corps. Who indeed could venture to advise that measure when the most influential citizens were openly plotting for the return of the Medici ?

The decree carried, Machiavelli occupied himself in April with writing the letters and instructions required to bring the cavalry into existence.⁴ In May he went to Pisa to garrison the citadel, then to Fucecchio and elsewhere to raise fresh levies. At the beginning of June he was at Sienna, which city was very well disposed towards Florence ; he then went again to Pisa, and on the 20th of June was in Florence and engaged in pushing on the preparations for defence.⁵ Then once more he hurried through the Florentine dominions to infuse energy and superintend the execution of orders already given. On the 27th of the month, Giovan Battista Ridolfi, Potestà and Captain of Montepulciano, wrote that Machiavelli had arrived there at a very opportune moment, since having attended the Council held by the Priors, he had succeeded in reanimating the spirits of the citizens, whom he

¹ " Opere," vol. vii. pp. 420, 421.

² " Scritti Inediti," published by Canestrini, p. 368 and fol.

³ See the Provvisione in the " Opere," vol. iv. p. 447.

⁴ " Scritti Inediti," pp. 382-4.

⁵ " Opere," vol. vii. pp. 420-26 ; " Scritti Inediti," pp. 378-80.

had found full of terror, and instead left full of confidence in the protection of Florence. The letter went on to say, that in various quarters bands of several hundreds of the papal cavalry had shown themselves, and then ridden away without declaring their intentions. And it also related how Machiavelli "had been to Valiano to examine its defences and afterwards to Monte San Savino, to establish redoubts between that place and Fojano."¹ In July he returned to Florence;² but in August, when the enemy was drawing near, he went to Scarperia, and on to Firenzuola, where he gave the soldiers a third of their pay, to keep them well disposed for the work of defence. In fact Baldassare Carducci, who was going on an embassy to the Viceroy, wrote thence to say that they were now fitted to offer resistance to the enemy, since Machiavelli had collected another two thousand men, and was already organizing the artillery. But at Barberino, another point where the enemy might be expected, all the works were abandoned, and the Commissary wrote that he had no men to send from place to place, and that his only hope was that Machiavelli having so thoroughly fortified Firenzuola, at least in that direction the enemy's progress might be checked.³

For while troops were being concentrated at Firenzuola, the Viceroy, Raimondo de Cardona, had advanced from Bologna to Barberino by the Stale road, accompanied by Cardinal dei Medici, who had furnished two pieces of artillery, the army being unprovided with guns. Arrived at the frontier, the representatives of the Republic demanded to know their intentions. They replied that they came to execute the decrees of the Confederates, namely, to depose Soderini, who had always been too friendly to France, to establish a government in which they could place confidence and to reinstate the Medici as private citizens. The Viceroy also demanded a considerable sum of money: according to Buonaccorsi, 100,000 ducats. The same requests were renewed at Barberino. It is certain, that at this juncture, an arrangement might have been concluded by giving the money and allowing the return of the Medici. But the Gonfalonier, always of irresolute temper, foresaw that, once in Florence, the Medici would assume the mastery, and drive him away by changing the government. Besides, he thought his forces sufficient to resist so small an army as that of the Viceroy.

¹ "Opere," vol. ii. p. 428.

² "Scritti Inediti," pp. 385-94.

³ "Opere," vol. vii. pp. 431-8.

Both he and Machiavelli were deceived upon this point, and the latter, with exaggerated confidence in the militia, continued to direct the defence, without taking alarm on seeing that while he fortified one place, the enemy quietly slipped through another, because he had settled to make a stand against them at Prato. Therefore Guicciardini was right in saying that the Florentines "had few men-at-arms; no infantry save those collected at random, or enlisted in their militia (the majority of whom lacked all experience of war); that they had no excellent captain, in whose merit or influence they could put their trust; while, as for the other leaders, they were of such sort, that never in the memory of man had there existed any less worthy of their pay."¹

Nevertheless, the Gonfalonier seemed resolved to act with energy. He imprisoned twenty-five of the more suspected citizens, and then assembling the Great Council, delivered a lengthy speech explaining the real state of affairs. He declared himself ready to resign his office, if that was the wish of his fellow citizens; but he begged them to reflect that his expulsion would fail to conciliate his enemies, because they really desired to change the government, and the Medici, sooner or later, would destroy liberty and take their revenge. If, however, the city would join with him and support him, he was prepared to make a vigorous defence, so long as the citizens were willing to make the necessary sacrifices. His speech was eloquent, and had a great effect, and the citizens, assembling in benches (*nelle panche*) according to custom, declared unanimously for the maintenance of the popular government and the defence of their liberties.² This, in fact, was the general opinion, since only the more ambitious and powerful citizens were opposed to Soderini from jealousy, but without yet daring to combat him in public. Consequently, the sums required for the defence, about 50,000 ducats, were voted without delay, and at that moment all men seemed to

¹ "Storia d'Italia," vol. v. p. 152.

² Soderini's speech is given in Guicciardini's "Storia d'Italia," vol. v. p. 157. Filippo Nerli, in bk. v. p. 168 of his "Commentarii," says that he heard the speech, which was "very beautiful and very fitting, and was also transcribed very elegantly by Messer Francesco Guicciardini in his 'Storia.'" And Jacopo Guicciardini, in writing to his brother Francesco (Guicciardini, "Opere Inedite," vol. vi. p. 95), confirms that the whole Council voted unanimously for the Gonfalonier, "for," he says, "public opinion went with him, and only the men of worth (meaning the richer and more influential) were discontented, because he always wished to do as he pleased."



SIEGE ARTILLERY.

(From the "*Supplementum Chronicarum*," 1486.)



SIEGE OF A TOWN IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

(From the "*Mer des Histoires*,")

be of one mind. Too soon, however, it became clear that this harmony was only apparent.

A Council of Condottieri being assembled, in six days 9,000 infantry and 300 men-at-arms were collected, which number, however, included the militia light horse; and it was decreed that the whole force should encamp outside the walls.¹ "Prato, where the first attack was expected, was garrisoned with 4,000 infantry, chiefly of the militia, the rest hastily recruited from the lowest classes, and a few men-at-arms."² The latter belonged to the contingent recently stripped of their arms in Lombardy, and their commander was Luca Savelli, an old but unskilful captain. Artillery, ammunition, and supplies were all scanty, and treason lurked on all sides, and to so great an extent that some of the men purposely scattered on the ground the gunpowder that they were to carry to Prato,³ "where the matchlock men were so short of ammunition as to be forced to strip lead from the roof of a church to make bullets."⁴ Nevertheless, Soderini was still hopeful, asserting that as soon as the enemy had passed beyond Barberino, he should be able to send 18,000 men and the artillery to Prato. Meanwhile the Viceroy had arrived before the town with 5,000 Spanish infantry and 200 men-at-arms, but with no artillery save the two pieces brought by Cardinal dei Medici, who followed the camp. The army was starving, unpaid, and without supplies of any kind, but it was composed of men who had served in the battle of Ravenna. And these were the opponents of Machiavelli's raw militia, who had never smelt powder. Now, indeed, the Ordinance was to be put to the proof.

The Spaniards' first attack failed for want of artillery, and the

¹ These figures are given by Jacopo Guicciardini, in the letter to his brother quoted above. "*Opere Inedite*," vol. vi. p. 95.

² In the "*Storia d'Italia*," vol. vi. p. 158, Guicciardini says 2,000 infantry and 100 men-at-arms; Buonaccorsi says 4,000 infantry and 40 men-at-arms. "*Diario*," p. 182. Buonaccorsi is generally the authority referred to by Nardi and Guicciardini. Jacopo Guicciardini, in the letter we have quoted, also gives the figures 4,000 infantry and 100 men-at-arms. The different numbers assigned to the latter is probably caused by some including the militia light horse, and others excluding them.

³ Pitti, "*Storia Fiorentina*," in the "*Archivio Storico*," vol. i. p. 101. The same volume contains three narratives of the sack of Prato, of which the more trustworthy is that by Modesti. See also Buonaccorsi, towards the close of the "*Diario*"; Nardi, "*Istorie*," &c., vol. i. pp. 487-90.

⁴ "*Narrazione del sacco di Prato*," by Sir Simone di Goro Brami. "*Archivio Storico*," vol. i. p. 254.

Viceroy, being in need of supplies, declared his readiness to enter into negotiations, provided Florence would receive back the Medici, immediately pay him 3,000 ducats, and also forward at once 100 loads of bread to relieve the hunger of his troops. Whether these proposals were sincere or not, many Florentines wished to accept them; but the Gonfalonier's hesitation allowed the favourable moment to escape, whereupon the Viceroy, having entered Campi by stratagem, and found provisions there, renewed the attack on the walls of Prato from another point. One of his two guns burst, the other did little execution, but at last he contrived to open a breach.¹ Then the assault was given. While some resistance was kept up at the two gates, the militia, charged with the defence of the breach, immediately gave way, flying like sheep. So on the 29th of August, 1512, at the 16th hour, the Spaniards entered Prato, and meeting with no resistance, began to pillage the town.² The number of killed during the sack is variously computed. Jacopo Guicciardini fixes it at 4,000, chiefly soldiers of the Militia Ordinance, who were nearly all exterminated, and he adds, "that the women were insulted and held at ransom, and all the monasteries turned into brothels." Other writers, like Modesti and Cambi, reckon the dead to be 5,000, while Francesco Guicciardini reduces the number to 2,000. The latter, however, evidently altered the figures and attenuated, in a sense favourable to the Medici, the facts gleaned from Buonaccorsi and by letters sent to him from Florence, which being now published in the "*Opere Inedite*" can be read by all the world. Among other things, he pretends that Cardinal Giovanni put a stop to the slaughter and saved the women, which is more than the Cardinal

¹ Buonaccorsi, "*Diario*," pp. 181, 182; Guicciardini, "*Storia d'Italia*," vol. v. p. 158 and fol.; Nardi, "*Storia*," vol. i. pp. 487-90.

² Buonaccorsi, at p. 182, says: "on the 30th of August, at seventeen o'clock;" Modesti ("*Archivio Storico*," vol. i. p. 238), says: "the 29th of August, at eighteen o'clock;" and Jacopo Guicciardini, in the letter to his brother, also repeats that the Spaniards entered the town on the 29th; but Vettori, at p. 291 of his "*Sommario*," says "the 24th of August." Cardinal dei Medici, in a letter to the Pope, dated 29th of August, 1512, and of which a summary is given in Sanuto ("*Diario*," vol. xv. sheet 14, St. Mark's Library in Venice), says: "This day . . . at sixteen of the clock, the town was sacked, not without some bloodshed, such as could not be avoided. Within the walls were three thousand battalions" (that is, three thousand militia), "of whom there are very few survivors. Luca Savelli and his son have been taken. The taking of Prato, so speedily and cruelly, although it has given me pain, will at least have the good effect of serving as an example and a terror to the others."

himself said in his letter to the Pope. According to Modesti's narrative, it was only after some days that he saved the women, who had taken refuge in his palace, "in what state may be imagined."¹ The slaughter was certainly enormous, as all contemporaneous writers declare, and as the Cardinal allows in his letter; and besides the slaughter, violence was done to the honour of the women.

" Qui ogni monasterio é saccheggiato
 Quì ogni chiesa s'usa per bordello.
 Di meretrice che loro han menato.
 Quì non giova a sirocchie aver fratello."²

So ran the doggerel verses of a contemporary chronicler, and all writers repeated the same thing. Nardi tells us of a young girl who threw herself out of a window to preserve her honour, and of a woman carried off by a Spaniard and kept as his mistress for some years, until at last she succeeded in cutting his throat and making her escape. She then came back to her husband at Prato, where she received a triumphant welcome, and was compared to Judith³ and to the most illustrious matrons of ancient Rome. It was said that among the few slain on the enemy's side, several circumcised corpses were found; hence the assertion that even Mussulmans were comprised in the Spanish army, and that this not only explained their atrocious cruelty, but also their monstrous contempt for Christian churches and religious houses.⁴

It was not surprising that the Viceroy should now increase his pretensions. Although at first he had gone so far as to say that he consented to leave the Gonfalonier Soderini in the city, and had held his tongue as to the Medici, he now declared his intention of reinstating them, of changing the government, and likewise demanded an immediate payment of 150,000 ducats.⁵ Florence could no longer refuse anything, and was disposed to accept any terms; but so great was the general panic, the disorder and the confusion, that it was impossible to come to any determination. Even the city's own soldiery became objects of fear, for so greedy did they appear of plunder and license, that although they were encamped outside the walls, the women of Florence were beginning to fly to the convents for refuge.⁶

¹ "Archivio Storico," vol. i. p. 243.

² Ibid., vol. i. p. 266.

³ Nardi, "Storia," vol. ii. p. 18.

⁴ Ibid., vol. i. pp. 493, 494.

⁵ Ibid. vol. i. p. 495.

⁶ Letter of Jacopo Guicciardini previously quoted.

The government of the Republic seemed already in the hands of the Medici. Cardinal Giovanni was in constant correspondence with the leading citizens, and Giulio, his illegitimate cousin, had already held a secret interview with Anton Francesco degli Albizzi in a villa belonging to the latter, for the purpose of planning the *coup de main* that was to put an end to everything. In fact, on the 1st of August, Albizzi, Paolo Vettori, Gino Capponi, the sons of Bernardo Rucellai and Bartolommeo Valori, a kinsman of Soderini, all very resolute young men, broke into the Palace, where the new Signory was sitting, forced their way to the apartments of the Gonfalonier, and violently insisted on the instant liberation of the twenty-five Medicean partisans he had recently imprisoned. They then threatened his life, if he would not resign office, but promised him safety if he would quietly take himself away.¹ Convinced of the inutility of any farther resistance, the Gonfalonier declared his readiness to yield, and having sent for Machiavelli, the only man in whom he could trust at this time of mortal danger, he despatched him to Francesco Vettori, the brother of Paul, to implore shelter in one of their houses, where he hoped to find greater safety than in his own. Francesco Vettori consented, after having been first assured by his friends that no violence would be used.² And directly afterwards, he, who although the friend of Soderini and Machiavelli, was working with his relatives to ensure the Medici's triumph, was summoned to the new Signory, so that, by assembling the magistrates, at least some apparent show of legality should accompany the change of government, now in rapid course of accomplishment. The legal number of magistrates and counsellors being in some fashion got together, they refused consent to the Gonfalonier's deposition. Upon this Vettori, who played a double part in the comedy, besought them with imploring gestures to decide on this step; since otherwise the young men who had already virtually deposed Soderini, would immediately rush to take his life. And in this way the object was gained.³ After this, he and Bartolommeo

¹ Nardi, "Storia," vol. ii. p. 13, and almost all other contemporary historians.

² This incident is recorded by Vettori himself in his "Sommario," p. 292, and has been also confirmed by others.

³ Nardi, "Storie," vol. i. p. 498. On the last day of August, the Cardinal and Giuliano dei Medici wrote from Prato to Pietro da Bibbiena in Venice, that Jacopo Salviati and Paolo Vettori had come as ambassadors to them, and that on the same day, at 16 o'clock, Soderini had been deposed by the Signoria and the Consiglio Grande. See Appendix (II.) of Italian edition, document xii.

Valori, with a troop of forty horse, escorted Soderini as far as Sienna. The ex-Gonfalonier then proposed going to Loreto ; but hearing from his brother the Cardinal that his life would be in danger by the way, he went instead to Ragusa, and not feeling safe even there, took refuge in Castelnuovo, which was under Turkish rule. Thus were overthrown the power and government of Piero Soderini, whom all impartial judges deemed an honest but very feeble politician. Even Francesco Vettori, who, as we have seen, joined his brother in compassing the Gonfalonier's fall, says that he was certainly "good and prudent and useful, that he never let himself be carried beyond the bounds of justice, either by ambition or avarice ; but that evil fortune (I will not say his but that of the wretched city) prevented him and others from discovering any way to avert the insults of the confederated powers."¹ This is truly singular language on the part of one who had contributed to the return of the Medici ; but precisely for that reason is highly credible. The historian Filippo dei Nerli, however, another zealous partisan of the Medici, expresses his views with greater sincerity. After blaming Soderini for not having sufficient consideration for the influential men who had aided him to rise, he concludes by saying that the Gonfalonier "never knew how to be either a bad or a good prince, and had too much belief that with patience, and—so the phrase runs—taking advantage of time, all difficulties could be overcome."² In point of fact this verdict differs but slightly from that expressed by Machiavelli, when he remarked in his "Discorsi," that Soderini "hoped by patience and goodness to extinguish evil humours ; without ever daring to extinguish them by force, although his enemies gave him occasion to do so. He was accustomed to excuse himself by saying, that it would have been necessary to violate the laws, the which would have bred hatred, and endangered, at his own death, the perpetual government of any other Gonfalonier, although in his judgment this was a useful government for the city. Nevertheless, one must never let an evil run on for the sake of some good, when this good may easily be crushed by that evil."³

Meanwhile the band of young men who had expelled Soderini,

¹ "Sommario," p. 289.

² Filippo dei Nerli, "Commentarii," &c., p. 110.

³ "Discorsi," bk. iii. ch. iii. ; in the "Opere," vol. iii. p. 310.

together with others, "all of bad intentions,"¹ assumed the guard of the Palace, and twenty citizens were speedily elected to deliberate on what was to be done. A few still hoped to find some way of preserving liberty;² but meanwhile, events followed their inevitable course. The Orators despatched to the Viceroy and the Cardinal were received by the latter with courteousness and modesty. It was enough for him, he said, to be received in Florence with his kindred as private citizens, and permitted to reacquire their possessions by payment. And truly no more honest request could be imagined on the part of one who had just triumphed by force of arms. But the Cardinal, as a guarantee for these modest demands, for his personal safety and that of his friends, also insisted on pledges; which evoked from the historian Nardi the just observation, that "he who demands freedom from molestation, wishing to live peaceably in the Republic, and desires pledges to that effect, does in fact bargain for and desire liberty to molest others."³ In the meantime the Florentines were compelled to join the league; to bind themselves to the payment of 40,000 ducats to the Emperor, of 80,000 to the army that had defeated them, and of 20,000 to the Viceroy himself. These sums, with other donations that had to be made, raised the total amount to 150,000 ducats. They were also pledged to engage 200 Spanish men-at-arms.⁴

¹ See the previously quoted letter of Jacopo Guicciardini.

² Ibid.

³ Nardi, "Storia," vol. ii. p. 4.

⁴ Ibid., vol. ii. p. 17; Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," vol. v. p. 152 and fol.





CHAPTER XV.

Return of the Medici to Florence, 1512—New form of government—Persecutions—Writings addressed by Machiavelli to the Medici—He is deprived of all his offices—Death of Julius II.—Election of Leo X.—Conspiracy and death of Pietro Paolo Boscoli and Agostino Capponi—Machiavelli is accused of complicity in the plot—He is imprisoned, put to the question, and afterwards released—His sonnets.

(1512-1513.)



THE Medici family were now represented by Cardinal Giovanni (1475-1521), its chief and leading spirit, afterwards renowned under the name of Pope Leo X., and by Giuliano (1479-1516), both brothers to Piero who was drowned in the Garigliano, and sons of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Lorenzo had been accustomed to say that he had three sons, of whom the first (Piero) was mad, the second (Giovanni) wise, and the third (Giuliano) good. That Piero was vain, childish and ambitious, we have already seen ; as to the Cardinal, he was keen witted and skilled in the conduct of affairs, an intelligent and faithful follower of the old Medicean policy ; while in conclusion Giuliano was fantastic, ambitious, and gentle at the same time. Third in order, but still a very influential member of the family, came Giulio (1478-1534), Knight of Rhodes, Prior of Capua, later Bishop, Cardinal, and then Pope Clement VII. He was a natural son of Giuliano, the younger brother of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who had perished in the conspiracy of the Pazzi in 1478. There were also two boys : a son of Piero, named Lorenzo (1492-1519), afterwards Duke of

Urbino ; and a natural son of Giuliano, named Ippolito (1511-1535), who afterwards became a cardinal. And with these two latter the main branch of the Medici was extinguished. At the moment of which we are now writing the stage was filled by Cardinal Giovanni, his brother Giuliano, and his illegitimate cousin Giulio.

Francesco degli Albizzi went to Prato, and on the 1st of September escorted Giuliano to his house in Florence, where he was speedily sought by his most faithful friends, among whom were the sons of Piero Guicciardini, and brothers of the historian, who was then in Spain as ambassador of the now fallen Republic. A great crowd speedily collected in the streets, and surged towards the Medici palace with loud cries of "*Palle ! Palle !*" Bernardo da Bibbiena, secretary to the Cardinal, who that same day had hastily left Prato to come to Florence, tells us how, being unaware that Giuliano had gone to the Albizzi house, he went with the others to seek him at the old Medici palace in Via Larga, and as soon as he arrived there, was surrounded by an eager crowd who covered him with kisses and embraces, and asked him interminable questions.¹ Giuliano, to use the words of Pitti, immediately showed "a very peaceable and courteous mind" in Florence. He went about the streets in his *lucca* or hood, and without any attendant, almost like a plain citizen, and even shaved his beard to conciliate the Florentine taste.²

Soon the Viceroy arrived, was introduced to the Council by Paolo Vettori, and given the seat of the Gonfalonier, whence he made a speech in favour of the Medici. Immediately after this, a Pratica was assembled, to which Giuliano was also invited, in order to decide on the manner of constituting the government ; and proposals were made—of a very temperate nature for those times—to which he gave his consent. They were to this effect : that the new Gonfalonier should be elected for one year, the number of the Council of Eighty increased, higher salaries given

¹ Letter of Bernardo da Bibbiena to his brother Piero in Venice, dated Rome, 6th of September, 1512. It is included in the "Diarii" of Marin Sanuto, and we give it in Appendix (II.) of Ital. ed., document xiii., because it not only describes the state of the city in those days, but even already speaks of the matrimonial negotiations begun by the Medici in order to give in marriage to Giuliano a niece of the Gonfalonier Soderini. Events hurried on, and the negotiations were broken off ; but, as will be seen later, they were afterwards resumed in another fashion.

² Pitti, "Storia," in the "Archivio Storico," vol. i. p. 103.

to the magistrates;¹ and as to the rest, it seemed that the old republican forms were to be retained. Meanwhile, in order to carry on affairs until the present Signory's term of office should expire, Giovan Battista Ridolfi was chosen Gonfalonier up to the end of October. He was related to the Medici, and held by many to be the leader of the *Ottimati*; nevertheless, he not only proved himself wise and courageous, but also friendly to liberty, which he seemed anxious to preserve. It was impossible that all love for the Republic should be at once extinguished in Florence, nor all the old aversion to the Medici swept away. The Medici were well aware of this, and therefore knew that it would be to their interest to proceed with great caution. Yet power was now in their grasp, events were turning more and more in their favour, and terror bent all to submission; so that it was impossible for them long to check their pace. Ridolfi himself soon perceived this. Soldiery and *condottieri* swaggered threateningly through the streets, and each day rumours were spread of new alterations in the government proposed by the Cardinal or the Spaniards. Thereupon certain citizens went to question the Gonfalonier, who replied: "What can we do? Do you not see that our enemies have put us in a closed barrel, and can easily attack us through the bung-hole?"²

Disorder increased, and the blood-stained booty brought from Prato was openly sold on the Piazza, which added to the horror of those who still loved liberty. At last, on the 14th day of the month, the Cardinal marched in with 400 lances; he was followed by a body of 1,000 foot soldiers under Ranieri della Sassetta, Ramazzotto and other well-known captains of adventure, who had always remained faithful to the Medici.³ The Cardinal was received with so much acclamation, that in writing to Pietro da Bibbiena in Venice, he said: "As regards this our expectation *fuit re ipsa longe superata*."⁴ The more decided of the Palleschi quickly gathered about him, and complained that the excessive goodness of Giuliano was allowing the fit moment for a radical change to slip by, and leaving things half done. No sooner had he entered the palace, where Giuliano was sitting in

¹ Nardi, Buonaccorsi, Guicciardini.

² Nardi, "Storia," vol. ii. p. 4.

³ Pitti, "Storia," in the "Archivio Storico," vol. i. p. 103 and fol.

⁴ This letter is of the 16th September, and is also included in Sanuto's "Diario," vol. xv. sheet 54r. See Appendix (II.) of Ital. ed., document xiv.

council with his friends, than there was a sudden incursion of numerous townspeople and soldiers, who, plundering the silver to the usual cry of "*Palle! Palle!*" demanded the convocation of a Parliament. This had always proved a sure mode of accomplishing by force all that was wished, while preserving a show of liberty.

In fact, on the 16th, a Parliament was assembled in the Piazza, attended not only by the people, but by the soldiery and captains of the Medici, as well as of the Republic, the latter having nearly all deserted to the enemy, seduced by the magnificent promises held out to them; and a *Balia* was immediately created of forty-five members, afterwards increased to sixty-six, all chosen by the Cardinal. This *Balia* was charged at the special instance of the people, with the reform of the government. Reform was to consist in placing things on the same footing as before 1494. That is, while apparently restoring old Republican institutions, to restrict all actual, practical government in the hands of the *Balia*. This had been the method pursued by Cosimo and Lorenzo, when, while feigning to be private citizens, they had made themselves masters of the Republic; and this was the object now to be attained. In fact, notwithstanding the reforms effected and the older Republican institutions apparently recalled to life, the *Balia* was the dominant power up to 1527. "In this way," so Guicciardini himself informs us, "the liberty of Florence was crushed by force."¹ And Francesco Vettori, an equally ardent partisan of the Medici, remarks: "The city was reduced to the point of doing nothing save by the will of Cardinal dei Medici; and this method is the method of perfect tyranny."²

Piero Soderini was instantly condemned to five years' exile in Ragusa, and his portrait was removed from the church of the Santissima Annunziata; Giovan Vittorio was exiled to Perugia for three years; and all the other Soderini, with the exception of the Cardinal, were relegated for two years to Naples, Rome, or Milan. Neither was Francesco Vettori for-

¹ "*Storia d'Italia*," vol. v. p. 167. At this point the "*Diario*" of Buonaccorsi comes to an end, and Nardi at last admits, for the first and only time, that he had copied from him: "from whose most faithful writings we have derived a great part of these memoirs." "*Storie*," vol. ii. p. 10. Let this serve to correct our too absolute assertion in the first part of this history (See note p. 258, vol. i.) that Nardi never quoted Buonaccorsi, but transcribed nearly the whole of his work.

² "*Sommario*," p. 293.

given for having escorted the ex-Gonfalonier and assisted in saving his life. Although Vettori had laboured so diligently for the Medici, although his brother Paolo had been one of the most daring ringleaders of the riot that had produced their recall, yet he was kept in prison for some time and several times stretched on the rack. Afterwards he passed a few days in retirement outside Florence, exclaiming: "This, then, is the reward of fidelity!"¹ but he soon regained the favour of the new rulers. Even a certain Antonio Segni, whom Cardinal Soderini had hastily sent after his brother Piero, to warn him on the road that his life would be endangered should he fall in the Pope's hands, was put to such cruel torture in Rome as to die of its effects.² A few dismissals and changes took place among the employés in the chanceries and other offices of the Republic; the militia was disbanded, to be replaced later by a ridiculous and ineffective imitation; and a loan of 80,000 ducats was levied on the citizens for the payment of the Spaniards. In the meantime the Viceroy, having received the first instalments of the money, and feeling sure of the rest, had left Florence and Prato ever since the 18th of September.

Thus ended the first period of the Florentine revolution. When it is remembered that one government had been destroyed to set up another; that the Medici, after eighteen years of exile, confiscation and persecution, had been restored by foreign arms, it must be allowed that, excepting the cruel and iniquitous sack of Prato, the work of the Spanish troops, they had behaved with praiseworthy moderation. They knew that their position in Florence could not long be maintained by revenge and violence; and accordingly began to try to win men's goodwill by favours, and gain over the people by festivities. To this end two societies were formed, the Society of the Diamond, so called from the crest of Giuliano its leader, the other, of the Big Branch,³ from the crest of Piero dei Medici, father of Lorenzo, who was at the head of the second company. Both set to work at once, and when carnival came, began to give representations of various *Trionfi* or masquerades, among others that of the Golden Age. The verses sung in the streets on this occasion are to be found among the *Canti Carnescaleschi*, and were the compositions

¹ Letter of Pandolfo Conti to Francesco Guicciardini, published in the "Opere Inedite" of Guicciardini, vol. vi. p. 145.

² Ibidem.

³ Broncone in popular phrase.

of Jacopo Nardi.¹ This circumstance deserves notice, inasmuch as Nardi, even in the most difficult and dangerous moments, had always shown himself a sincere, constant, and unchanging Republican; one of the few at that period, on whose political honesty no slur was ever cast. His participation in the festivities inaugurated by the Medici in the months closely following their victory, clearly proves that their restoration met with an acceptance far more universal than has been imagined. They were now powerful in Italy, and it was expected that ere long their power would be farther augmented by the elevation of the Cardinal to the chair of St. Peter, and this expectation was soon verified. Neither, too, could it be denied that the Medici loved Florence, and Florentine hearts were beginning to feel a certain pride in the rising fortunes of the family. It was hoped that some shadow of Republican institutions would survive, that the most influential citizens would be summoned to share in the government, and that the times of Lorenzo the Magnificent were about to return. It is a fact, that after the Spaniards had gone, the new government needed no support from foreign soldiery, since even those who had been most devoted to Soderini made no attempt at open resistance. The only conspirators were a few young and inexperienced enthusiasts, whose plots failed for lack of followers, and who were left isolated and forsaken by every one. That was all! Even the ex-Gonfalonier, Soderini, as we shall see, not only soon came to terms with the Medici, but became connected with them. He returned to Rome, and lived there quietly to his death.

What, then, was Machiavelli's position, what were Machiavelli's thoughts during these difficult times? Faithful to Soderini to the very last, he still defended him; yet, to state the blunt truth, he still hoped and desired to retain his post. In the same way as most of the adherents of the fallen government, he was disposed to adapt himself to the new order of things. He also thought that some form of Republican government might be built up under the protection of the Medici, and for that reason was ready to be their faithful servant, and openly said so from the beginning. In testimony of this we have a letter, undated, but certainly written shortly after the 16th of September, addressed to a lady of unknown name, but evidently a friend if

¹ Nardi, "*Storie*," vol. ii. p. 21; Vasari, "*Vite*," vol. xi. "*Vita del Pontormo*," p. 34 and fol., Le Monnier edition.

not a relation of the Medici, and possibly no less a person than Alfonsina Orsini, widow of Piero dei Medici.¹

He begins the letter by saying that he will relate all that has recently happened, in order to fulfil the lady's request and because events have "redounded to the honour of your illustrious Excellency's friends and my *masters*, which two reasons serve to efface the infinite pain that I have endured." He then briefly records the advance of the Spaniards, the hesitation shown in the negotiations and conduct of the Gonfalonier, of whom he speaks with deference. When the Spaniards demanded his resignation, Soderini had replied, "that he had not attained his dignity either by stratagem or violence, but that it had been conferred upon him by the people; therefore should all the monarchs in the world join together to urge his deposition, he would never agree to it; but if it were the desire of the people he would instantly resign office. That, on the contrary, having consulted the will of the people, all had unanimously agreed to support him at the risk of their lives." He then alluded to the capture and sack of Prato, without entering into details, in order "not to cause the lady painful emotion." He mentions that it cost the lives of over four thousand persons, "without virgins being spared, nor consecrated places, these latter being given up by the Spaniards to sacrilege and slaughter. Yet even then the Gonfalonier remained undismayed, and showed himself ready to accept any terms from the Spaniards, save the return of the Medici, which was exactly what they insisted upon. Then all was lost; it was even feared that Florence might be sacked, after the cowardice shown at Prato by our soldiers." It must have been very bitter for Machiavelli to write these words, after the lofty hopes once entertained by him of the Florentine soldiery. He then goes on to relate with much brevity and little precision, all that occurred down to the meeting of the Parliament that reinstated the Medici in the possessions and dignities of their

¹ Many supposed this letter to be addressed to Caterina Sforza, but she was no longer living at that period; others, and among them Giuliano dei Ricci, who was in a position to know the truth, declare it to be addressed to Alfonsina Orsini. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of uncertainty on this point, for it is not easy to understand how the widow of Piero dei Medici could have wished Machiavelli to relate to her the deeds done in those days by her own friends and relations; and there are also certain expressions in the letter that give rise to doubts. More probably it was addressed to Clarice, daughter of Piero dei Medici, wife of Filippo Strozzi. She died in 1528.

forefathers. "And this city is very tranquil, and hopes to lead, with their aid, no less honourable an existence than in past times, when their father, Lorenzo, of happy memory, was at the head of the government."¹

In reading this letter it is requisite to bear in mind the style of language then used to potentates, and that employed by nearly all the Florentine Republicans, who in those days had occasion to address the Medici in writing, or even to mention them in conversation. But although such comparison will persuade us that Machiavelli's letter contained nothing that was strange or unusual in his time, it helps to prove that he was desirous to retain office, and had no repugnance, but rather an earnest wish, to serve under the Medici. No one blamed him for this, in those days, not even the ex-Gonfalonier, who was not long in coming to an arrangement with the Medici. In the same way, no one deemed that any blame attached to Marcello Virgilio, who filling a higher post than Machiavelli in the Chancery, not only kept it, but remained upon the best of terms with his new masters.

Nevertheless, it is certain that on account of his share in the defence of the city, if for no other reason, Machiavelli knew himself to be in a very difficult position, and accordingly did his best to ward off the storm. In these same days he wrote another letter addressed to Cardinal dei Medici, of which only a fragment has been preserved. "In the belief," he says, "that affection may serve as an excuse for presumption, I will venture to offer you a piece of advice. Already officials have been chosen to investigate the old possessions of the Medici and enforce their restitution. These estates are now in the hands of those who bought them and are their legitimate possessors; their seizure, therefore, will generate inextinguishable hatred, for men feel more grief at the loss of a farm than at the death of father or brother, every one knowing that no change of government can restore a kinsman to life, but that it may easily cause the restoration of a farm. Far better then would it be to make the Balia vote an annual subsidy towards compensation for confiscated property. This is the record of my faithful convictions;" so the letter concludes, "and your Excellency will allow your prudence to decide."²

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. p. 23 and fol.

² The original autograph of this fragment is in the Florence Archives and was published by Passerini in a Florentine journal; and afterwards reproduced in the edition of Machiavelli's works brought out by Usigli, Florence, 1857, see p. 1146.

And again, in these last days, he addresséd another epistle to the Medici, containing advice of a more general nature, and to a certain extent assuming the defence of Soderini. Those who were hostile to him because he had never called them to share in the government, and had accordingly plotted in favour of the Medici, now assailed him with accusations and slanders of every description. Machiavelli therefore remarked, that these were malicious stratagems, to curry favour with the new rulers and the people, whom they wished to impress with the belief that they had been induced to change the government solely from hatred of Soderini, whom for this reason they accused of being the author of every ill that had now befallen the city. "Thus, by gaining the popular favour, they seek to make themselves necessary to the new rulers, against whom they could at a given moment excite the whole mass of the citizens. Soderini is now out of Italy, and powerless therefore for good or for evil ; the old and new governments are face to face, without hope of coming to a reconciliation. Those who have applied themselves to flattering the people and the Medici, could not exist with Soderini, of whom they are the natural enemies ; but they can come to terms either with this or that government, for the sake of achieving power. Consequently it is their aim, by gaining influence over the people, to become as it were patrons of the Medici. The Medici, therefore, should endeavour to separate them from the people, so that they may be compelled to throw themselves into their cause, as the only chance of safety."¹

We do not know what induced Machiavelli to compose these three epistles. It is impossible for us to say whether he wrote them all by request, as he states in the first only ; whether, availing himself of the office he still held, he put himself forward ; or whether he composed them, as was usual enough in those days, merely as a vent for his opinions. This seems very credible in the case of the second and third letters which have come down to us in a somewhat sketchy and fragmentary condition. In whatever way these pressing counsels were offered or sought to be offered, their object is plain, as it is also plain that the method he

¹ This epistle was first given to the world by Signor Cesare Guasti, on the occasion of the Bongi-Ranalli marriage : under the title of "*Ricordo di Niccolò Machiavelli ai Palleschi del*" 1512. Prato, Guasti Printing Press, 1868. The original manuscript is in the Florence Archives, and begins thus : "*Notate bene questo scripto.*"

had chosen was one of very doubtful success. Throughout his life Machiavelli, as all his works prove, had great faith in the people and an equally great distrust and antipathy for the aristocracy and every government in the hands of a few powerful and privileged men. He showed these sentiments even now in the hour of the Medicean victory, and wished to see the Medici confide in popular support, instead of becoming the tools of Soderini's enemies. But events were at the mercy of those who had prepared the way for them, and the Medici could not lean on the people who was adverse to them, and turn away from those who had effected their recall. Now these latter were the enemies of Soderini, and were no less hostile to his friend Machiavelli, whom they had no intention of allowing to retain his post. Thus, to struggle against them only served to heighten their enmity. Besides, although the magistracy of the Ten lingered on for some time longer, that of the Nine of the Militia had been immediately abolished, and as early as the 19th of September all the constables of the Militia Ordinance had received their dismissal.¹ Accordingly, while Marcello Virgilio, who was First Secretary of the Republic, but had taken no part in political affairs, remained in office, Machiavelli, by a decree of the Signory, unanimously passed on the 7th of November, 1512, was dismissed from every post he held: *cassaverunt, privaverunt et totaliter amoverunt*.² The same fate befell Buonaccorsi on the same day.³ Besides this, a fresh decree sentenced Machiavelli to a year's banishment to a certain distance from Florence, but within Florentine territory and without permission to leave it. He was also to find sureties for the total sum of one thousand *lire*, to guarantee his submission to the sentence. And on the 17th of November both he and Buonaccorsi were forbidden to cross the threshold of the Palace for a whole year, an order that in Machiavelli's case was several times provisionally rescinded,⁴ because he had to render up the accounts of his administration, and supply all required explanations. All this he was able to do with such great and praiseworthy exactitude that his adversaries

¹ Ammirato, "Storie Fiorentine," bk. 29, commencement, vol. vi. p. 8, of the Florence edition, Batelli, 1849. Paoli, "Priorista" (pp. 176, 177), in the appendix to the "Ricordi Storici" of Filippo Rinuccini, published by Aiazzi.

² "Opere" (P. M.), vol. i. p. 83.

³ Florence Archives, "Deliberazioni dei Signori e Collegi," 1511-12, No. 104 (class 11, dist. 6, No. 176), at sheets 116r and 117.

⁴ "Opere" (P. M.), vol. i. pp. 83-5.

found no pretext for the slightest accusation or reproof. His post was given to Niccolò Michelozzi, a known adherent of the Medici, and whose sole business, now that the Militia Ordinance was abolished, consisted in writing letters.¹

Then all the mock reforms (for so they were styled) were suddenly interrupted by events abroad and at home, and the latter served to aggravate Machiavelli's afflictions. Owing to the withdrawal of the French, Parma, Piacenza, Modena, and Reggio had surrendered to the Pope; Brescia had been ceded to the Viceroy; Peschiera and Legnago had capitulated to Lang, Bishop of Gurk, who was a sort of *alter ego* of the Emperor in Italy. As usual, this aroused much discontent, and the allies would have come to open strife among themselves had not the Pope gained Lang over to his side by receiving him with the greatest kindness and giving him a cardinal's hat. This instantly brought about a new alliance between the Pope and Maximilian (proclaimed in November at the church of Santa Maria del Popolo), the adhesion of the Emperor to the Vatican Council, and the return of the Sforza to Milan. Maximilian, son of Lodovico the Moor, was escorted to Milan to take possession of the Duchy, now much diminished, because every one had seized a morsel of it for himself. The Spaniards agreed to these arrangements; but the Venetians objected to them, being fiercely opposed to the cession of Vicenza and Verona to the Emperor, which only served to cement and strengthen his alliance with the Pope. The latter was at last indeed able to call himself content. It is true that instead of ridding Italy of barbarians, the land was now, thanks to him, a prey to Germans, Spaniards, and Swiss; yet he had driven out the French, dispersed the *Conciliabolo*, assembled the Lateran Council, extended and strengthened the temporal power of the Church, won reputation for his arms, and made Rome the centre not only of Italian, but almost of the world's affairs. But precisely at this moment he fell ill, and died on the 20th of February, 1513. Guicciardini says of him that he would have been worthy of great glory had he been a secular prince instead of Pope. It is certain that

¹ On the 20th of November, Piero Guicciardini wrote to his son Francesco, in Spain: "The Signory has cashiered Machiavello and Biagio, and have set up ser Niccolò Michelozzi in Machiavello's place, for the despatch of letters, for there is no talk of battalions at present, and all their constables have also been cashiered. Messer Marcello retains his post" (Guicciardini, "Opere Inedite," vol. vi. p. 155).

he was a man of great strength of mind, of stern resolve, and turned Italy and the whole world upside down ; therefore all men now yearned for quieter times.

The conclave began its work animated by these sentiments, and on the 6th of March, Cardinal dei Medici was carried in on a litter, for he was suffering from an incurable fistula, which made it unpleasant to be in his company. An enemy of the French, who had always been fatal to his house, and raised to a lofty position by the deceased Pope, he was generous to prodigality, had the great gift of winning every one's liking, had enjoyed from his earliest youth the best literary training, was an enthusiast for the fine arts, a genuine Mæcenas, of mild and affable manners, and very prudent in his conduct. All these qualities seemed to indicate him, at this juncture, as the most fitting candidate for the papal throne, the only objection being his youth, since he was not yet forty. Nevertheless, there was a party of young cardinals in the conclave who were strongly in his favour. On the other hand, he had a decided opponent in Cardinal Soderini ; but the latter's vote was purchased by the promise of recalling the ex-Gonfalonier from exile, of releasing the other members of the family from outlawry, and of giving the daughter of Giovan Vittorio Soderini in marriage to the youthful Lorenzo dei Medici.¹ These arrangements made, Cardinal Giovanni was elected by a large majority on the 11th of March, and as he was not yet in priest's orders, but only a simple deacon, he had to be ordained before his consecration. The first ceremony took place on the 15th ; on the 17th he was consecrated Pope, under the name of Leo X. ; on the 19th he was crowned. The ceremony of his investiture surpassed in splendour and luxury anything previously seen, even in an age so remarkable for splendour and luxury. The festivities of a single day cost the sum of 100,000 ducats.² There were triumphal arches and inscriptions, processions, statues of pagan divinities, money scattered on all sides. The days of Imperial Rome seemed to have returned. In Florence this election was hailed with universal rejoicing, for the new Pope was a Mæcenas and a Florentine, and all hoped to obtain his favours. It seemed to occur to no one that in this way the

¹ Nerli, "*Commentarii*," pp. 124, 125. The same things are recorded by other writers of the time.

² Guicciardini, "*Storia d'Italia*," vol. v. pp. 196-8.

Medici were striking still deeper root, and gaining more power and mastery, and that henceforward their expulsion would be an impossibility. On the contrary, the city appeared to take pride in the Cardinal's election.

But a Genoese who witnessed the great joy of the Florentines, remarked to them : " Just now you congratulate yourselves on having a native Pope ; but before you have had so many as Genoa has had, you will have learnt, to your cost, what the greatness of Popes may bring upon independent cities." ¹ This man was not only a true prophet of after events ; but, meanwhile, the public rejoicings were already disturbed by a very strange and painful circumstance that happened at the time. Shortly before the arrival of the news of the illness of Julius II., a certain Bernardino Coccio, of Sienna, found in the house of the Lenzi, Soderini's kinsmen, a slip of paper dropped from the pocket of a young man named Pietro Paolo Boscoli, who was a well-known adversary of the Medici. Coccio had picked up the paper, and seeing that it contained a list of eighteen or twenty names, including that of Niccolò Machiavelli, he consigned it to the *Balia* of Eight, who, scenting a conspiracy, immediately imprisoned Boscoli, together with his intimate friend, Agostino di Luca Capponi. Being put to torture, they both freely confessed that they had intended to redeem their country's liberty ; but had formed no conspiracy, nor communicated their designs to any one, that the names on the paper were only those of persons whom they hoped to find favourable, supposing them to be friends of free government. Nevertheless, the majority of those on the list, together with others, were thrown into prison ; and although it seemed clear enough that the affair was of little moment, and had no support from the citizens, yet Boscoli and Capponi, after being kept in confinement from the 18th to the 22nd of February, were decapitated on the evening of that day. Cardinal dei Medici had left Florence the day before, after being assured of the final sentence.²

This was a very piteous case, for Boscoli and Capponi, besides being young, inexperienced and enthusiastic, were men of culture and nobility of feeling. Both met their death with much courage, Capponi with almost scornful indifference, while still proclaiming his innocence. Boscoli, who was thirty-two years of age, a handsome, fair man, of engaging appearance, showed equal intrepidity, but was stirred by very different emotions. A friend of his, Luca

¹ Nardi, "*Storia*," vol. ii. p. 31.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 25 and fol.

della Robbia, related to the great sculptor of that name, came to assist him in his last hours, and wrote down word for word the conversation they held together. We have already alluded to this paper, and must now mention it again, for it is an historical document of great value for the due appreciation of the psychological condition of the Italian mind at that period.

When, towards evening, his speedy execution was announced to him, Boscoli became greatly agitated. He seized the Bible and read aloud from it, invoking the spirit of Savonarola to aid him in its interpretation ; and he asked for a confessor from the monastery of St. Mark. To Capponi, who said to him almost in tones of reproof : Oh, Pietro Paolo, then you are not content to die ! he would pay no attention. He had no fear of death ; the thoughts that tormented him were of another kind. He hoped to derive strength to die from the stoicism of the ancient philosophers, and reminiscences of Pagan heroes who had exalted conspiracy and inspired hatred against tyranny. But he felt no strength ; he knew not how to meet death with the quiet conscience of a believing Christian. Turning to his consoler, Della Robbia, he exclaimed : Oh, Luca, pray get Brutus out of my head, so that I may make this step entirely as befits a good Christian ; and then fell into an agony of despair. On the arrival of the confessor, Della Robbia hurried to meet him, and asked him privately : Is it really true that St. Thomas condemns conspiracy ? And as the friar replied in the affirmative, he added : Well, then ! tell him so, that he may not die in ignorance. When the confessor, seeing the great agitation of the unhappy youth, tried to inspire him with courage to meet his fate, Boscoli immediately answered with some irritation :—Father, do not lose time in teaching me what I already know from the philosophers. Help me to learn to die for the love of Christ. On being at last led to the scaffold, the executioner, with singular and truly Tuscan courtesy, begged his pardon while fastening his bonds, and offered to intercede with the Almighty for him. Boscoli replied : Fulfil your office ; but when you have placed my head on the block, let me stay a little, and then despatch me. I shall be grateful if you will pray to God for me. He had determined to devote his last moments to a final desperate effort to approach the Almighty.

The confessor felt so much admiration for Boscoli, that, on afterwards meeting Della Robbia, he told him that he had wept for a whole week, so greatly had he learnt to love the courageous youth

during that fatal night. I believe him to be a blessed martyr, he said, in conclusion,—a martyr who has gone straight to Paradise, without being detained in Purgatory. And as to the question you asked me that night on the subject of conspiracy, I must tell you that St. Thomas draws a distinction. In the case of tyrants chosen by the people, it is not lawful to conspire against them, but if, on the contrary, they have established themselves by force, then conspiracy becomes a virtue. But avoid repeating this to any one, otherwise it will be said, that these friars always twist things to suit their affections. Luca della Robbia records that, on going home, he referred to the pages of St. Thomas Aquinas and found that the friar had quoted him correctly.¹

This narrative clearly shows how often Christian and Pagan ideas were then in conflict, notwithstanding the enormous labour expended on endeavours to bring them into harmony. Christianity had taken possession of private life, of individual morality, and in that way had been easily brought into agreement with the resuscitated philosophy, especially by means of the new Platonism. Public life, on the other hand, seemed to form a world apart—a world whose laws were very frequently opposed to Gospel morality, and of which the ideal was rather to be found in Greek and Roman history. Most certainly the conspirators, patriots, politicians, and captains of the Italy of the Renaissance, drew their inspiration from Brutus, Cæsar, Lycurgus, Solon, or Epaminondas, but never from the Gospel. This generated contradictory mental states, of which we find numerous examples in the literature and life of the period; but it has never been so graphically set forth and described as in Robbia's account of the confession of Boscoli.

The condemnation of the two young men, and the fact of Machiavelli's name having been mixed up with the conspiracy, gave an exaggerated importance to the whole affair. Of this we find trustworthy evidence in the letters of Giuliano dei Medici. On the 19th of February, the day after the first arrests, he wrote on the subject to Pietro Dovizi da Bibbiena, in Venice, telling him that "a plot had been discovered intended to do violence to me and to some concerns of ours; but nothing has been ascertained save an evil intention without bottom or following."² He sub-

¹ "Recitazione del caso di Pietro Paolo Boscoli e di Agostino Capponi," written by Luca della Robbia in the year 1513. "Archivio Storico," vol. i. pp. 283-309.

² This letter is included in the "Diarii" of Marin Sanuto. See Appendix (II.) of Italian edition, document xv.

joined a list of twelve citizens, more or less compromised, and among them stood the name of Machiavelli, who, in fact, was also cast into prison. Giuliano wrote no more at that time. But during the first moments a certain alarm had been felt, and therefore a decree was issued, requiring the citizens to cease from wearing arms. And the citizens not only laid aside their weapons, but hastened to Giuliano's residence to assure him of their fidelity; and some relations of the accused prisoners even came to ask that justice should be executed.¹

On the 7th of March, when Boscoli and Capponi were already dead, and the various trials at an end, Giuliano again wrote to Bibbiena, saying that the city had shown the greatest affection to the Medici, and adding: "Boscoli and Capponi, young men of good families, but without followers, have been the ringleaders of the conspiracy. They meant to dispossess us; they had fixed the spot, and drawn up a list of persons with whom they thought to find favour; they had spoken with and secured the attention of Niccolò Valori and Giovanni Folchi. For this reason the two principals have been condemned to death, the two latter to confinement for two years in the fortress of Volterra. Several have been banished into the country for having had some share in the plot; all the others who were accused and imprisoned have been set at liberty as innocent men, after having given trustworthy bail."²

And no word was said regarding Machiavelli. He had been at once thrown into prison, and put to torture with the others, to see if any information could be extracted from him. His name stood on the list given up to the Eight; and the office he had filled, and his constant friendship for Soderini, cast suspicion upon him. His attestations of submission to the Medici had served him little; whereas all that he had said and written against Soderini's Florentine accusers and slanderers, had done him serious injury. Had he been guilty, he certainly would not have been spared; but after a few turns of the rack,³ and after the confessions of his com-

¹ These notices are taken from a letter written from Florence on the 13th of February, and is to be found in the "Diarii" of Marin Sanuto, vol. xv. at sheet 320r, in St. Mark's Library at Venice.

² See Appendix (II.) of Ital. ed., document xvi., for this second letter, which is also to be found in the "Diarii" of Sanuto.

³ In Ricci's "Priorista" (Quartiere Santo Spirito, at sheet 270) it is related that he suffered four turns of the rack; while elsewhere, as we shall see, the number given is six.

panions, his judges were convinced that he knew nothing, pronounced him innocent and set him at liberty.¹ Also the Pope, having already satisfied his first longing for revenge, showed a disposition for leniency, as soon as his election was proclaimed; and therefore, by a decree of the 4th of April, the Balia granted full pardon, not only to all those suspected of complicity in the plot, but even released from banishment the Soderini family, inclusive of the ex-Gonfalonier.² It is easy, however, to comprehend that suspicion, imprisonment, and torture, should have deeply afflicted Machiavelli, and aggravated to no slight degree the distresses of his present position.

On the 13th of March he wrote to Francesco Vettori, Ambassador in Rome, and announcing his release, added that in this affair all things had combined to his injury. He trusted, however, to fall into no more dangers of the kind, "not only because I shall be more cautious, but because the times will be more liberal and less inclined to suspicion." After Vettori had replied, with protestations of friendship and encouraging words, Machiavelli wrote again to say that he had known how to face his fate, and had borne his affliction with so much hardihood, "that I am really pleased with myself, and think there is more in me than I ever before believed."³ And, even then, with his hands still crippled and painful from the torture he had suffered, he expressed his desire and hope of being employed by the Medici. But of that matter we shall speak further on.

In face of these real and ascertained facts, all fantastic theories about Machiavelli having then conspired in favour of liberty, and against the life of Giuliano dei Medici, and of his having suffered confinement and torture in that cause, entirely disappear. No one, save inexperienced youths, would have dreamt of conspiracy at a moment when the entire city was so well disposed towards its new masters, and so proud to see one of them raised to the Papacy. Machiavelli, on the contrary, was occupied in meditating how best to shield himself from the storm, and as usual was weav-

¹ The 26th of June, 1513, Machiavelli wrote to his relative, Giovanni Vernaccia, at Pera, telling him not to be astonished that he had not heard from him for so long; "rather is it a miracle that I am still alive, for I have been deprived of my office, and I have been on the point of losing my life, which God and my innocence have preserved to me" ("Opere," vol. viii. p. 59).

² Ammirato, "Istorie Fiorentine," vol. vi. bk. xxix. p. 313; "Archivio Fiorentino," cl. 11, dist. 4, No. 19, sheet 101.

³ Letter of the 13th of March, 1512-13. "Opere," vol. viii. p. 23.

ing complicated schemes, by which, under the high protection of the Medici, at least some fragment of liberty might be preserved. But what can we think of the three sonnets, written by him in these days, and dedicated, as it would appear, to Giuliano dei Medici? Two of them, indeed, seemed to have been composed in his prison cell for the purpose of obtaining pardon. In the first he narrates how the Muse came to seek the poet and did not recognize him, finding him so sadly changed that she mistook him for a madman, wherefore he appeals to Giuliano to prove his identity. In the second he describes the prison in which he was lodged, after having suffered six turns of the rack.¹ The stench was horrible, the walls "crawling with vermin so big and swollen that they seem like moths." On all sides is a noise as of hell. This prisoner is being chained, that one loosened, a third cries that the ropes are hoisting him too far from the ground.

"Quel che mi fe' più guerra
Fu che, dormendo presso all' aurora,
Cantando sentii dire : Per voi s'òra.
Or vadano in malora,
Purchè vostra pietà ver' me si voglia,
Buon padre, e questi rei lacciuol ne scioglia." ²

Is it possible that Machiavelli, from his prison, should have addressed these verses to Giuliano? Of course we are aware that at all times he was apt to push sarcasm and satire to the point of cynicism, jesting even on things and persons that were sacred to him. There is his well-known epigram, for instance, on the death of Piero Soderini, whom nevertheless he had always loved, and to whom he was to the last a most faithful friend :

"La notte che morì Piero Soderini,
L'alma n'andò dell' Inferno alla bocca ;

¹ Ricci, as we have said, speaks of four turns only ; Machiavelli, on the other hand, alleges that there were six. It will be seen, however, that we cannot regard these sonnets in the light of indisputable historical documents.

² These lines may be roughly rendered :—

"That which most hurt me
Was that, as I slumbered near to dawn,
I heard a voice chaunt : For you they pray.
Now may all perish,
If your mercy only incline to me,
Good father, and will loose me from these guilty bonds."

E Pluto le gridò : Anima sciocca,
Che Inferno ! va 'nel Limbo dei bambini. " ¹

Some have thrown doubts on the true authorship of these lines ; but not only have they long been attributed to Machiavelli, and published under his name, but even his own grandson, Giuliano dei Ricci, in the "*Priorista*" from which we have so frequently quoted, attributes them to his grandfather without expressing the slightest doubt upon the subject, and excuses him by saying that he wrote them merely as a poetical exercise, since he had always had the most genuine esteem for Soderini.² The fact is, that in these jesting lines, putting aside the question of their bad taste—there is a certain foundation of truth ; and Machiavelli had always censured the Gonfalonier's excessive moderation, accusing him of having, even in the hour of danger, put his trust in half measures, and of never daring to take vigorous steps in order to protect himself from the enemies of the Republic.

The two sonnets, however, constitute a very different case. What opinion of him could we entertain had he really written to Giuliano, that on hearing the funeral chaunts accompanying the friends of liberty on their way to the scaffold, he had exclaimed, "Well, let them perish, so long as Your Magnificence will grant me pardon?" Cynicism so degraded as this would have disgusted even Giuliano, who, in his letters to Bibbiena, speaks with dignified reticence of the two young men who were condemned to death. Neither can it be supposed that Machiavelli's numerous enemies, who heaped so many false and slanderous accusations upon him, would all have kept silence on a circumstance that certainly did him very little honour. Also, if he had really exceeded in this fashion, it is scarcely probable that he would not have made some allusion to it in his letters to Francesco Vettori, to whom he detailed all that he did and said in those days, and whom he begged to intercede for him with the Medici. But these letters, on the contrary, tend to prove that he then appealed to no one, that he suffered torture with fortitude, and that certainly he was not upon sufficiently familiar terms with Giuliano to dare to

¹ "The night that Piero Soderini ceased to breathe,
His soul journeyed to the mouth of Hell ;
But Pluto cried : 'Thou foolish soul,
No Hell for thee ! Go seek the Limbo of the babes !'"

² "Machiavelli wrote this epitaph in a poetic spirit, since whenever he spoke seriously and not in jest of Soderini, he always praised him and held him in high esteem." Ricci's "*Priorista*," *Quartiere Santo Spirito*, sheet 237.

address burlesque verses to him in the hope of winning his favour. To him and to Paolo Vettori he owed his speedy release from confinement; but had he indeed sunk so low as to scoff at his dying companions, how could we credit him with the impudence of asserting in letters addressed to a friend of the Medici, that he had borne his trials with so much fortitude as to have risen considerably in his own esteem?

Surely, too, it is strange that these two sonnets should have remained entirely unknown up to the beginning of this century! Ricci, who so diligently collected and transcribed everything relating to his grandfather's works, makes no mention of them. They were first heard of in a novel by Rosini, written in 1828, and again, soon after, in a biography of Machiavelli by the French writer, Artaud, issued in Paris in 1833.¹ Both said that they had received a copy from Signor Aiazzi, of Florence, who had discovered the originals in Machiavelli's handwriting upon two sheets of paper placed as markers in a book, and thus forgotten for centuries. Aiazzi, although he had frequently edited old MSS., neither gave these sonnets to the world, nor wrote anything about them; he merely kept copies for his friends and sold the originals to an Englishman. All this seems very strange, so strange, indeed, as almost to make us doubt the authenticity of the sonnets. Nevertheless both Rosini and Artaud assure us that they are authentic, and so too says Tommaso Gelli, former librarian of the Magliabecchiana, who states that he has seen the original autographs.² Besides this, the form of the sonnets, their diction and style, were judged by all as conclusive evidence of Machiavelli's

¹ G. Rosini, "Luisa Strozzi," Florence, Le Monnier, 1858, pp. 217 and 218; Artaud, "Machiavel, son génie et ses erreurs," Paris, 1833, two vols. Vol. i. pp. 225 and 226. Rosini says in a first note (p. 217): "The originals of these sonnets were discovered by chance by Signor Giuseppe Aiazzi, a Florentine, who has favoured me with a copy. They were afterwards taken to England." And in the second note: "It appears that both were dedicated to Giuliano dei Medici, the brother of Leo X." Artaud says in the note to p. 227 of vol. i., that Signor Aiazzi, who had given him the two sonnets, "les a trouvés écrits de la propre main di Machiavel, sur deux feuilles placées dans un volume anciennement imprimé, comme pour indiquer un passage remarquable. Le propriétaire du livre, après en avoir tiré copie, a vendu les originaux dix louis à un seigneur anglais, qui doit aujourd'hui les posséder à Londres."

² There is a pamphlet at the bottom of case vi. containing a sheet, with two sonnets, and Gelli's declaration, stating them to be copies of an autograph MS. sold to a Mr. Clinton or Clarton (the writing is difficult to read), for the sum of 34 piastres.

authorship.¹ It is possible to cavil at certain expressions,² but there are no real, intrinsic reasons for doubting their authorship. The conclusion we have come to is this: that the sonnets in question are not supplications for pardon, and that they were never sent to Giuliano; but were instead written for amusement, as a capricious, ironical, even cynical outburst, and composed by Machiavelli in a moment of ill-humour. Thus he wrote them with comic exaggeration, wilfully making himself appear worse than he was, and later forgot all about them, unable to foresee that after many centuries they would be disinterred, and that he would be called to account for words he had possibly used only for the sake of rhyme. And that the two sonnets are to be regarded rather as jesting trifles, than in any other light, is confirmed by a third discovered at a later date and published by Trucchi in 1847.³ In this Machiavelli sends Giuliano a gift of thrushes, begging him to give them to his enemies to nibble, so that they might cease from gnawing him (Machiavelli) so ferociously. And if the thrushes are thought lean, I shall say that I too am lean, "yet they get good mouthfuls out of me."

"E spiccan pur di me de' buoni bocconi."

Now, it is not likely that any one will believe that Machiavelli should have actually sent a present of thrushes to Giuliano. So it is plain that in a fit of rage and ill-humour, he, who was not only unconcerned in the conspiracy, and too experienced to even hope for any good results from it, indulged his bile by a private outburst against the spitefulness of fate, and against the man who had so lightly exposed him to so bitter a trial. In doing this he

¹ This, too, is the verdict given by Professor G. Carducci, in answer to our inquiries.

² For example, we have seen that according to the sonnets, Machiavelli had suffered six turns of the rack, while according to the evidence of his grandson Ricci's "*Priorista*," the number was limited to four. There is, too, some exaggeration in the description of prison horrors, and of the clanking chains worn by Machiavelli and his fellow prisoners, things of which no mention is made in the letters written to Vettori. All this, however, proves nothing. They are matters of little moment. It is certain that the prisoners were chained, just as it is possible that Ricci did not know the exact amount of torture inflicted upon his grandfather.

³ Trucchi, "*Poesie inedite di dugento autori*," four vols. Prato, Guasti, 1846 and 1847, vol. iii. p. 175. This sonnet, says Trucchi, "is extracted from a Lucchese codex, transcribed by the hand of the very learned Canon Biscioni, who found it in the Codex of Redi" (*Ibid.* p. 172).

overstepped all limits, and his sarcasm amounted to cynicism ; but this happened to him more than once in his life, and his writings furnish us with many other examples. But this in no way justifies a suspicion of degraded cowardice at a moment when, on the contrary, Machiavelli had given proofs of undoubted courage.





CHAPTER XVI.

The Medicean government in Florence—Machiavelli's difficulties—His correspondence with Francesco Vettori.

(1513-1514.)



THE fortunes of the Medici were now rising with marvellous rapidity, not in Florence only, but throughout Italy. From all parts of Europe men of letters were hastening to Rome to wait upon the new Pope, at whose hands they hoped for a return of the Golden Age. And the Pope immediately chose for his secretaries two *literati* of great celebrity—Bembo and Sadoleto. His first acts proclaimed the advent of tolerance and peace. At Florence, as we have seen, the prisoners suspected of a share in the plot were liberated by his express desire. The pact arranged with the Soderini for the marriage of Gian Vittorio's daughter to Lorenzo dei Medici could not be carried out on account of the lively opposition of Lorenzo's mother, Alfonsina. However, the Pope thought that he had adjusted matters well by transferring the bride to Luigi Ridolfi, his sister's son.¹ This alliance was useless for the prosecution of his pacific intents, as he found when it was too late; but for the moment things went smoothly, and apparently every one was content. The ex-Gonfalonier established his residence in Rome, and even his relatives returned from banishment. The Cardinals of St. Malò, Santa Croce, and San Severino, were reinstated in

¹ Nerli, "Commentarii," pp. 124, 125.

their dignities. Besides the two Orators, Jacopo Salviati and Francesco Salviati, already settled in Rome, Florence sent a special embassy of twelve citizens to offer their congratulations to the new Pope. The number of Florentines daily arriving on their own account to present congratulations and ask favours went on multiplying to so great an extent, that at last Leo. X. exclaimed, that in all the throng he had only met with two men—Soderini, who was supremely wise, and a certain Carafulla, who was supremely foolish—who had appealed to him in the interest of their city instead of in their own.¹

As may well be imagined, the Pope's relatives were not backward in appearing. Giulio dei Medici, one of the first to arrive, was created Archbishop of Florence on the death of Cosimo dei Pazzi, and afterwards Cardinal. Giuliano was elected Captain and Gonfalonier of the Holy Church; later he was married to Philiberte of Savoy, and thus became Duke of Nemours, and was more and more alienated from the government of Florence, for which he never seemed to have much inclination. He had a fantastic, almost mystical disposition, causing him to waste much time in endeavouring to peer into the future; still he was not wanting in vague and even sometimes noble ambitions, and was also susceptible to generous impulses. These he manifested when the Pope wished to confer upon him the Duchy of Urbino, forcibly dispossessing Francesco Maria della Rovere. Giuliano declined the offer, because he had been sheltered at Urbino in times of adversity, had afterwards received many benefits from Della Rovere, and would not pay him back with ingratitude. Lorenzo took great pleasure in ruling Florence; but he wished to rule as absolute master, and this being impossible soon wearied of the task.

Lorenzo had now returned from Rome in the company of Jacopo Salviati, a very powerful citizen who had been sent with Vettori, as one of the ambassadors to the Pope, in order to remove him from Florence, where he was considered over friendly to free institutions. But no one dared refuse him leave to return, on his decided declaration that he would no longer stay away.² On this occasion the Pope thought it needful to give Lorenzo a few written instructions of his own, on the method of ruling the town with prudence. They were to this effect: "Thou must use thy best endeavours to introduce men of thine own into all the

¹ Nardi, "*Storie*," vol. ii. p. 33.

² Nerli, "*Commentarii*," p. 120.

principal offices of the State. Seek to be well informed how the Signory agree with one another, and for this purpose thou wilt find a useful instrument in Niccolò Michelozzi." This individual, therefore, who was Machiavelli's successor, was almost to act the part of confidant and spy. "Whenever," the Pope continued, "it may be requisite for thee, in order to yield to appeals, to employ persons of whom thou art not assured, at least take heed that they be not men of much courage or talent. Then, above all, thou must assure thyself of the Eight and of the Balìa, and have some one among them to provide thee with minute reports of everything, according to my own practice." In fact, all State affairs were decided by the Eight, and the Balìa was the chief and trusted instrument by which the Medici had always been able to preserve their authority in the Republic. "It is necessary to disarm the citizens; take heed of spies; satisfy the ambition of those who cannot be in the Signory by giving them lesser offices; show much justice to the poor and to the peasantry; never be involved in any civil suits about money affairs. It is highly important to elect to the offices of the *Monte*, or Bank, keen-witted, secret, and trusty men, entirely devoted to thee, since the *Monte* is the heart of the city."¹ The Medici had often, in case of need, and without the slightest scruple, appropriated the public monies; and therefore the Pope pointed out and recommended the best way of ensuring this, in these instructions which form so exact a summary of the traditional policy of his house.

But the final result of these astute counsels was, that Lorenzo was compelled to re-establish things as they had been before 1494; that is to say, with all the appearance of temporary Republican institutions, and with a Balìa enabling him to obtain the election of whichever magistrates he pleased. For the moment, the general sifting of candidates was already completed, and it would have been inexpedient to renew it. The Council of Seventy was revived, as it had been originally established in 1482 by Lorenzo the Magnificent, and also the Ancient Council of One Hundred, renewed every half year, and which had power to decree taxation grants of money, and even pass laws of greater importance—matters previously always requiring the sanction of the Seventy. Also, to pander to every one's ambition, occasional popular and

¹ "Instructione al Magnifico Lorenzo," published by Tommaso Gar in the "Archivio Storico," Appendix 8 (pp. 299-306), among the "Documenti riguardanti Giuliano dei Medici e il pontefice Leone X."

communal councils were chosen by ballot, with right of decision on the petitions of private individuals, always, however, after discussion in the Council of Seventy. And in order to simulate a complete revival of the institutions prior to 1494, the Council of Ten for war was replaced by the Eight of Pratica. In point of fact, however, these institutions were now, as under the Medici, nothing more than empty shams. The whole government was carried on by the Balìa and the Seventy.

Nevertheless, it was difficult steering among so many treacherous rocks, and the greatest caution was required. The more so because, now that Cardinal Giovanni was Pope, none of the Medici remaining in Florence possessed sufficient personal authority to ensure safety amidst such hazardous and uncertain conditions; and what was worse, had little interest in the task. Bishop Giulio thought only of ecclesiastical advancement, dreaming, too, of the Papal crown, which he afterwards attained. Giuliano was weaving great and novel designs; and his courtiers even mooted the possibility of his becoming King of Naples, during the political complications that were at hand. There remained Lorenzo, who was very young and of a tyrannical nature, but, as we have remarked, he too became wearied of Florence. On the one hand there was the Pope advising prudence, and on the other, no sooner did he show his desire to act as real master, than he received warnings from various quarters, especially from Jacopo Salviati, that he had better be careful, since this was not the way to long retain his place at the head of Florentine affairs. All these reasons made him prefer to recur to the rôle of Pope's nephew, rather than enjoy a mere show of power on condition of observing a thousand precautions with every one and in all things, while in Rome "he had to consider no one in the world."¹ Nevertheless, Leo X. was anxious that the government of Tuscany should be retained by his family, inasmuch as his influence over Italian and foreign potentates was thereby greatly increased. So, for some time Florentine affairs continued to oscillate between republican forms and despotic government.

A similar state of things was well adapted to tickle the hopes of Machiavelli, and set his intelligence to work. Once the Medici, whether willingly or unwillingly, should consent to accept power in the shape of a sovereign protectorate of the

¹ Vettori, "Sommario," p. 300.

Republic, and this prove to satisfy the universal wish of the citizens, he thought it would be easy to strike out new combinations, by means of which, while contenting the ambition of the *masters*, it might be possible to preserve liberty for the future. Might not the marvellous good fortune of the Pope furnish a way of establishing the affairs of Italy on a permanent footing? Machiavelli desired and knew himself qualified to offer a huge amount of excellent advice, and felt some astonishment that no one had yet thought of applying to one, who by his work with Soderini, had demonstrated his powers of usefulness and his entire trustworthiness. But exactly because he had been the factotum of the fallen government, it was not probable that he should be sought or accepted by the very men by whom that government had been overthrown. They might desire to conciliate the rich and powerful Soderini family, of which one member wore the purple, but there was no reason for them to fear, or show consideration to a simple secretary. In fact, Machiavelli's circle of friends was rapidly thinning, and he found himself forsaken, and left to pine in idleness and misery. It cannot be said that he was actually in poverty; but the modest paternal inheritance, that in 1511,¹ and by an agreement with his brother Totto, had come into his possession, was certainly not ceded to him without compensation, nor was it unburdened with debts. We find a receipt dated 1513,² of the payment of the large sum of a thousand florins, made in various instalments in his name and that of his brother Totto. This had left him with means barely sufficing for the ordinary necessities of an increasing family. At that time he had a wife, one daughter, and three sons, and in September, 1514, another male child was born to him. Even his grandson Giuliano dei Ricci spoke of him as "poor and burdened with children."³

Accustomed to spend freely, the sudden failure of his salary and the heavy payments which he had to make almost at the same time, compelled him to calculate every farthing, endure many

¹ "Opere" (P. M.), vol. ii. pp. 58, 59.

² This bears date 28th of October, 1513, and is to be found numbered 212 among the documents of the Ricci-Poniatowski Archives, recently added to the Florence Archives. The receipt is signed by Pier Francesco *del fu* Antonio da Rabatta as procurator for Leonardo di Piero Pitti to Niccolò di Bernardo Machiavelli and his brother Totto in quittance of one thousand gold florins, paid in several instalments, according to the terms arranged in 1510.

³ "Priorista," Quartiere Santo Spirito, at sheet 160r.

privations, and sometimes even lack the necessities of life. He found this insupportable ; but harder still, to a man of his very active temperament, was the forced idleness to which he was now condemned. He had never exercised the profession, nor led the life of a man of letters ; neither had he the dignified energy and moral strength of character which almost exult in resistance to unmerited blows of adversity. His condition was indeed pitiable. He struggled painfully against misfortune, and in vain sought an office that should bring him emolument and occupation. He heard from afar news of the great events going on in Italy, and his mind was feverishly excited by daring, profound, and singular reflections upon what was being done, or on what might and should be done by genuine statesmen. But as these were nothing but vain speculations, he speedily relapsed into pangs of lonely despair. Thereupon he gave himself up to sensual pleasures ; mocked at everything and everybody ; and invoked his pungent, biting gift of satire, to deaden the pain of his humiliation. He wrote verses pregnant with cold, ironical cynicism ; he planned indecent comedies. Then, all of a sudden he would turn to the poets, the historians of old ; would pace up and down, book in hand and meditating on the past or the present, in the solitary woods of his little estate near San Casciano, which was his place of retirement. After these rambles, he would shut himself up in his study, and forgetting his troubles, would pen some of the pages of political science which have kept his name alive through all these centuries. But then again echoes of outer events would awaken his attention, and once more excite his desires and hopes of better days and of practical activity. And thus his life dragged on amid these alternations of feeling.

About this time Machiavelli had the good fortune to find a friend, and better still a confidant, to whom he could pour out his feelings ; and thus we find in his letters an exact, faithful, and eloquent exposition of his mental experiences. Indeed, these letters are memorials of great importance in the literature of the sixteenth century ; since they constitute the first example of intimate and minute psychological analysis, are almost a confession and examination of conscience carried on reciprocally by the two friends. Machiavelli's correspondent was moved to follow Machiavelli's lead to so great an extent, that occasionally the letters of the one might be confounded with those of the other.¹

¹ See "Die Briefe des florentinischen Kanzlers und Geschichtschreiber N. Mach-

Now in the correspondence of Guicciardini and his other contemporaries, we only descry the writer's real mind as though through the folds of a thick veil ; for all these men merely described and analysed that which they did, never that which they felt. Machiavelli showed a fuller self-consciousness, a livelier need of opening his soul ; therefore—rarely as he spoke of himself—his letters afford us the first really clear manifestation of the modern spirit. All the more strange, therefore, is it to note that in all these confidential outpourings he makes not the slightest mention of his wife or his children. This silence was the one link still connecting him with his times, for in those days writers never seemed to admit their readers into the innermost recesses of their private emotions.

The confidant of Machiavelli was, as we know, the Ambassador, Francesco Vettori, who, although left alone in Rome by the departure of Salviati, had very little business to transact, since the Pope himself assumed the direction of the government of Florence. So his time was passed in writing a few despatches to the Signoria and the Eight of Pratica, and in endeavouring to gain the patronage of the Medici for himself and also for his friends, including Machiavelli ; but without taking much pains about it, or ever imperilling his own interests. A man of culture, talent, and decidedly loose habits, he now devoted his leisure partly to study of the classics and partly to sensual pleasures, although he was no longer young, and had a wife and marriageable daughters. He was not even restrained by the dignity of his office ; but, on the contrary, delighted in freely speaking and writing on the most unseemly topics. What chiefly bound him to Machiavelli, besides the old habit of intimacy, was his high esteem for the ex-secretary's intellect, and consequently his keen desire to know the latter's opinions on the great events either daily occurring or foreseen to be near at hand. And Machiavelli, being always ready to discuss politics, replied to him at great length, either to kill time or the better to win the esteem and

ia velli. Aus dem Italienischen übersetzt von D. Heinrich Leo. Berlin, Ferdinand Dümmler, 1826. It is very difficult to understand how a man of the talent and erudition of Herr Leo, can have been led to state in the preface to this translation that Vettori was a pedant of no talent (pp. 24, 25). His "*Sommario della Storia d'Italia*," from which we have frequently quoted, would be alone sufficient to prove that he was a man of great capacity, and that Herr Leo has grossly misjudged him. The many offices filled by Vettori with distinguished credit, also testify to his importance as a politician.

goodwill of the friend from whom he hoped to receive assistance.

Such was the origin of this correspondence, which, particularly in the years 1513 and 1514, was carried on without any interruption. Its principal themes were, first of all, the politics of the day; then Machiavelli's occasionally expressed desire to obtain employment, and Vettori's efforts in his favour; and lastly, the narration of their love affairs. Truly this narration is but too often of so indecent a character as to excite indignant disgust. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that it was chiefly in such matters that the times differed so strangely from our own. In these days much is done that is never mentioned, while at that time men talked freely even of things that were not done. Conversation or correspondence on the most scandalous subjects, especially on the part of men who, like Vettori and Machiavelli, had passed their youth and been trained among scholars, was little more than a praiseworthy literary pastime, an imitation of the antique, even of nature itself. Giuliano dei Ricci, who was a decorous man, living at a later period, and to whose industry we are indebted for many of these letters, stated, after transcribing them, that the aim of his labour was to show his "gratitude to the remains of those two excellent men, my relations."¹

After reading these epistles with the closest attention, and comparing those of Machiavelli with Vettori's published and unpublished papers, we have come to the conclusion that the latter is very precise and exact in narrating incidents which had really happened to him, with a cynical frankness leaving no room for doubt. Machiavelli, on the contrary, either through fanciful caprice or for the sake of imitating his friend, greatly exaggerated facts which were only partially true. On every occasion when it has been possible to follow with some certainty the development of his pretended love adventures, we have seen them shrink to much smaller proportions, and almost fade into nothing, proving in the end far more innocent than they appeared at the beginning. Nevertheless, they had still some basis of truth; since he neither was, nor ever pretended to be, a man of chaste habits. And during that period so fatal to Italy, many tried to drown in sensual pleasures the pangs of ruined hopes and vanished illusions, together with their presentiments of greater evils to come. It cannot be denied that more than once Machiavelli

¹ "Priorista" Ricci, Quartiere Santo Spirito, famiglia Vettori, at sheet 87r.

sought relief in a life that lowered him in his own eyes and inevitably degrades him in ours.

The correspondence began on the 13th of March, 1513, by a letter in which Machiavelli told Vettori of his release from prison ; and directly after, while still bearing the scars of the torture inflicted upon him, he adds : " Try, if possible, to keep me in the memory of our master ; so that, if it were possible, I might begin to be useful in some way to him or his house, since thereby I should be doing credit to you and good to myself." ¹ And five days later, having thanked his friend for the goodwill shown by him at the time of his incarceration, and told him that he owed his safety to the Magnificent Giuliano and to Paolo Vettori, he again appeals to his kind offices, in order that " these *masters* of mine may not leave me in neglect. And if nothing can be done, I must live as I came into the world, for I was born poor, and learnt to want before learning to enjoy." Meanwhile he rubbed on in the society of his friends and running from one woman to another ; " and thus we go on gaining time in the midst of this universal happiness, and enjoying what remains to us of the life that seems like a dream." ² And Vettori, in reply, without holding out any definite hopes, invited him to his house in Rome, " where we will try so many devices that we shall contrive to succeed in something ; and besides, there is a wench near my house who will help us to pass the time." ³ But however much Machiavelli tried to maintain his courage and to keep pace with his friend's jests, yet he could not hide his dejection. The news received of the failure of the attempted negotiations had " frightened him more than the rack." " Yet," he added, " if we cannot roll, we must let ourselves be rolled, and I will give myself no concern about it." ⁴ No sooner did Giuliano go to Rome, than Machiavelli again appealed to Vettori to do at once all he could in his favour. " It is an excellent opportunity, and if the thing be skilfully managed it is impossible that I should not obtain some employment, if not in Florence, at least in the service of Rome and the Papacy, in which case I ought to be less suspected." And in the same letter he gives a description of the far from respectable company in which he lived, and whose place of meet-

¹ " Opere," vol. viii. letter ix., 13th of March, 1512-13.

² Ibid., vol. viii. letter xi., 18th of March, 1512-13.

³ Ibid., vol. viii. letter xiii., 9th of April, 1513.

⁴ Ibid., vol. viii. letter xiii., 9th of April, 1513.

ing was the shop of Donato del Corno, whom he describes in such fashion as though to indicate that the man in question kept a haunt of vice. But suddenly he can no longer restrain himself, and exclaims like one driven to despair :

" Però se alcuna volta io rido e canto,
Facciol, perhè non ho se non quest' una
Via da sfogare il mio angoscioso pianto."¹

And then he once more changes the subject.

Here, however, it may be noted that there must have been much exaggeration even in his way of speaking of this Donato del Corno and the shop kept by him. Ricci simply tells us that he was "a pleasant and well-to-do man, and that his shop was the meeting-place of many persons, and particularly of Niccolò Machiavelli, for whom he had a great friendship."² In fact this Donato must have been a man of great wealth and also of some ambition, since he was able to make a loan of 500 ducats to Giuliano dei Medici when the latter first came to Florence ; and afterwards, through Machiavelli, he intimated to Vettori, that he would give 100 ducats to any one procuring his election as a member of the Signory. Vettori could accomplish nothing, but Donato del Corno was elected in 1522, "perhaps," remarks Ricci, "with smaller trouble and expense."³ Now although all this may prove that the man was an intriguer, it is clear that to become a member of the Signory he must have been an individual of some note, and that it was impossible that his shop should have been a haunt of ill fame.

From the month of April almost to the close of the year, Machiavelli's letters took a much graver tone, for they turned chiefly upon politics. During these months he was entirely absorbed in study ; and as we shall find, composed the "Principe," also worked at his "Discorsi," and therefore gave no attention to Vettori, who was always inciting him to indecent and burlesque narratives. On the 23rd of November, the Ambassador, after describing his own life in Rome, again urged Machiavelli to come

¹ " Yet if I sometimes laugh and sing, it is because 'tis only thus I may vent my bitter tears." See "Opere," vol. viii. letter xiv., 16th of April.

² Ricci, "Priorista," Quartiere Santo Spirito, sheet 284.

³ See the before-quoted "Priorista" (Quartiere Santo Spirito, sheet 284), and several of Vettori's and Machiavelli's letters speak of this affair.

to him there. "I have made a collection of historians—Livy, Florus, Tacitus, Suetonius and others—with whom I while away my time; and in reflecting what manner of Emperors this wretched Rome that shook the world has had to submit to, I am no longer surprised it should have tolerated Popes such as the two last. I have nine serving-men, and I see very few people. I write a letter now and then to the Ten,¹ chiefly for the look of the thing, for no business is going on. During the summer I led a very sober life, being in dread of fever; nevertheless, I have always had a few women about me. This, then, is the life I invite you to share. You would have nothing to do but go out to look about you, and come home to enjoy yourself."² Machiavelli does not seem to have paid much heed to these offers just then; but Vettori returned to the charge, and on the 24th of December, gave him a long account of his love affairs and of the intrigues and scenes which had taken place at his house. These he evidently found very amusing, although he made a show of being ashamed of them, as unfitting to a man of his age and position, and wrote in the tone of one appealing to Machiavelli for advice.³ The latter, after being so much pressed in various ways, was at last stirred to reply, and in two letters of the 5th of January and 4th of February, thoroughly unbridled his tongue. It would be quite impossible to repeat his words. He referred to the scenes described by Vettori, reproduced them in his imagination, gave life and action and speech to all the personages, with a genuine *vis comica* entirely worthy of Boccaccio, whom indeed he has more than once surpassed. He wound up by saying: "And since you come to me for advice, as to one who understands womankind and has suffered the stings of Love's darts, I would counsel you to throw off all restraint, and give yourself up to Love without heeding what any one may say; this I myself have done, for I have followed Love over hill and dale and through forest and field, and have found that thus Love caressed me more than if I had

¹ The Magistracy of the Otto di Pratica, substituted for the Dieci di Balla, only entered upon their office on the 10th of June, 1514. Florence Archives, "Lettere degli Otto," years 1514-16, chap. x. dist. 5, Nos. 49-50.

² Letters of Vettori, dated 23rd of November, 1513, and 18th of January, 1513-14. "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. Nos. 26 and 28. *Vide* Italian edition, Appendix, document xvii.

³ Letter of Vettori, dated 24th of December, 1513. "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. No. 27. *Vide* Italian edition, Appendix, document xviii.

avoided him."¹ And the letters continue to run on in this strain.²

But the burden of pecuniary difficulties by which Machiavelli was oppressed again crushed out all desire for mirth. "The officers of the *Monte* have summoned me to pay taxes to the amount of nine florins of *Decima*, and four and a half of *Arbitrio*.³ I am struggling to get out of it as best I can, and if you could write a letter certifying to the impossibility of my paying so much, I will leave the matter in your hands."⁴ And, accordingly, Vettori wrote in his friend's behalf, declaring that he was "poor and worthy, and, whatever may be said to the contrary, is really so, as I can affirm. He and I have acted in such fashion, that we have taken a great deal of trouble, without ever laying aside a penny. He finds himself with heavy liabilities, with a scanty income, is now penniless, and is burdened with children."⁵ But there was no improvement in this state of things, for on the 10th of June in the same year Machiavelli wrote despairingly to Vettori: "Thus, then, I shall have to cower among my rags, without finding any man to take thought of my services, or to think that I can be good for any purpose. But it is impossible that I can long go on thus, for I am wearing out; and I see that I shall be forced, if God will not aid me, to engage myself as a pedagogue, or retire to some out-of-the-way spot to teach children their letters, forsaking my own family as though I were dead; for they would get on better without me, since I am only a burden to them, being accustomed to spend, and unable to exist without spending. And I hope not to write to you again on this subject, which is as odious as possible."⁶ Nevertheless, he did return to it again, and also recurred to the topic of some love affair of his.⁷ But now leaving this ungrateful theme, we may come to the chief argument of these letters, namely the remarks and discussions on

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. letter xxix., 4th of February, 1513-14.

² Letter of Vettori, dated 9th of February, 1513-14; "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. No. 29. *Vide* Italian edition, Appendix, document (xvii.); "Opere," vol. viii.; Letter xxx. of Machiavelli, dated 25th of February, 1513-14.

³ *L'Arbitrio* and the *Decima*, or Tithe, were two different taxes.

⁴ "Opere," vol. viii. letter xxxi., of 16th of April, 1514.

⁵ This was first published by Passerini in the Florentine journal, "Il Statuto;" afterwards in the "Opere," Florence, Usigli, 1857, at note to p. 1146.

⁶ "Opere," vol. viii. letter xxxiii., of 10th of June, 1514.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. viii. letters xxxiv. and xl., of 3rd of August, 1514, and 31st of January, 1514-15.

the political events of the day. These events were on all men's lips, and we must give a rapid outline of them, for the better appreciation of the warmth with which they were commented upon by the two friends.

After the death of Queen Isabella, Ferdinand the Catholic found himself in a position of some difficulty in Spain, where he was only able to preserve order by violent means, and by engaging his subjects in foreign expeditions. He had recently struck one of his accustomed keen and daring blows against the kingdom of Navarre. Profiting by the arrival of 10,000 English soldiers, come to join him in his war with France, he demanded right of passage through Navarre, with the temporary possession of the fortresses; and on the refusal of his strange request, took possession of the whole country. The English withdrew in hot anger, and the French, though desirous of revenging the overthrown prince, also ended by withdrawing. In April, 1513, the French signed a truce with Spain, only to hold good for the countries beyond the Alps, and for the term of one year; but they afterwards renewed it for the following twelvemonth. No one seemed to understand the object of this truce, and it contented no one in Italy. It cost Louis XII. the sacrifice of Navarre, and gave Ferdinand time to consolidate his conquest, but on the other hand he was at liberty to prosecute the war in Italy without danger of attack behind his back. Therefore the allied powers, finding themselves compelled at all risks to continue the war, raised the cry that Spain had betrayed them.

In fact, shortly after the election of Leo X., news of the truce was received, and it was also known that France had allied herself to Venice for the purpose of attacking Lombardy in concert. The Venetians, having to reconquer their ravished territories, placed their army under the command of Bartolommeo d'Alviano, and France, intending to seize the Duchy of Milan, despatched an army led by La Trémouille. The Pope was dissatisfied with Spain on account of the truce, but was still more irritated that France should have made alliance with Venice, without asking the opinion of him who wished to be considered the leader of Italian affairs.* He therefore declared himself opposed to the war that was already beginning. In June, the French descended into Italy; and shortly before, the Swiss, hired for the Duke of Milan by his active and keen-witted secretary Girolamo Morone, had also crossed the

* Vettori, "Sommario," pp. 299 and 303.

Alps. Meanwhile the Spanish and Imperial troops had beaten the Venetians and advanced as far as Marghera; and France, being attacked at home by the English, Swiss, and Imperial forces, experienced another serious defeat in August, and lost Picardy. Thereupon Louis XII. became more tractable, and sought to make peace by concluding a treaty with the Pope in December, and disowning the *Conciliabolo*.

It was at this moment that Leo X. plunged headlong into political intrigue, and began to show his real character. Elected Pope when barely thirty-seven years of age, his affable manners and the reputation for goodness and intellect that he had so dexterously established, had inspired all men with the best hopes concerning him. When, however, it was seen that he began by creating four new Cardinals, and rapidly increased the number to over thirty; that he pursued a policy of vacillation and bad faith with all, even without any particular motive; then the general opinion soon began to change. He made a league against Spain with England and with France, and from the latter power obtained the hand of Philiberte of Savoy for Giuliano dei Medici, who thus became Duke of Nemours. At the same time he was secretly preparing another league against France, and in order to induce Venice to join him, sent Cardinal Bembo on a mission to the Republic. Venice, however, simply replied that the Holy Father would do better to remain faithful to the French alliance, through which he might hope to win the kingdom of Naples for his brother Giuliano. Upon this head Vettori remarked: "Seeing that the Pope broke his oaths, and made a constitution one day only to destroy it on the next, he began to lose his reputation for goodness; and although he said many prayers, and frequently fasted, no one believed in him any more. Undoubtedly it is a great labour to try to be at the same time a temporal lord and a religious man, for whoever considers attentively the precepts of the Gospel, will see that the Pontiffs, while preserving the title of Vicars of Christ, have founded a new religion that is Christian only in name; for Christ prescribed poverty, and the Popes desire wealth; He prescribed humility, and they are followers of vainglory; He prescribed obedience, and they wish to command all the world." ¹ And this was the language held by the Florentine Ambassador in Rome, the friend and adherent of the Medici,

¹ Vettori, "Sommario," p. 304.

whose advice Machiavelli so eagerly sought, in order to be able to gain employment and favour from Leo X.

It may truly be said that the events we have just mentioned were of a sort to turn the strongest brain. Vettori and Machiavelli followed them in their letters step by step, and examined them very minutely. Vettori wrote that he would never discuss politics again, seeing how everything was ruled rather by chance than by reason. To this Machiavelli replied on the 9th of April, 1513: I have experienced the same feeling; yet could I speak with you, I should do nothing but fill your head with castles in the air, since fate has so willed it that, not being able to talk of the manufacture of silk, or wool, nor of gains and losses, I must either hold my tongue or reason of State affairs.¹ But more than all the rest, it was the news of the unexpected truce between Spain and France that excited the speculations of Vettori, who wrote that one morning he had stayed in bed two hours later than usual, vainly guessing at the reasons by which Spain had been induced to sign the truce. He then propounded his own doubts to Machiavelli, and asked his opinion, "since, to tell you the truth, and without flattery, I have found you stronger in these matters than any other man with whom I have spoken. If the truce be a fact, we must say that either the King of Spain is hardly the wise man he is accounted, or that some mischief is brewing, and that Spain and France want to share between them this poor Italy of ours. The more I meditate upon this whirligig, the less can I arrange it in my head. How I wish that you and I could start together from the Ponte Vecchio, and down Via dei Bardi all the way to Castello, to talk over this whim of the King of Spain! At the very moment that he has won an advantage over the French, he leaves them at liberty to carry on the war with Italy, whence he desires to expel them. If he found himself in too weak a condition, he would have done better to cede them Milan outright, rather than put them in a position to seize it on their own account."²

Machiavelli held a different opinion, although he was much pleased with Vettori's letter, and wrote to him that it had made him forget his own unhappy circumstances. "I seem to have gone back to the complications that cost me so much useless labour, and on which I spent so much time. I think that the

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. letter xiii., of 9th of April, 1513.

² Ibid., vol. viii. letter xvi., of 21st of April, 1513.

King of Spain has always been more cunning and fortunate than prudent. As I will not, without reason, allow myself to be moved by any authority, and as *I cannot swallow whole countries*, so I do not believe that there is any hidden meaning in the truce, and incline to think that Spain may have committed an error, planned things badly and executed them worse.¹ Besides, in the present case, we may find an explanation of the truce while even allowing that the king has acted wisely. He made the agreement because he saw how weak was the assistance of the allies, because his country is weary and exhausted, and his best soldiers are in Italy. By the cession of Milan he would have largely augmented the power of France, who is always his enemy, and still more greatly irritated the allies. Now, by means of the truce, he opens the eyes of the latter, removes the war from his own gates, and throws Italian affairs into a state of turmoil and discord, in which he thinks to find something to undo and some bones worth the picking ; and he hopes that eating will set every one drinking. The confederates being driven to war will certainly suffice, if not to prevent the conquest of Milan, at least to check France. And to my judgment, the end that the King of Spain has in view, is precisely that of compelling, by means of the truce, England and the Emperor to make war in earnest, or at all events to afford him efficacious help. He has always been the ruler of new States and others' subjects. Now, one of the methods of holding these States, and either winning over the doubting souls of these subjects, or keeping them still in doubt, precisely consists in inspiring great expectations of himself at the close of the new enterprises. Such was the monarch's policy in the campaigns of Granada, Africa and Naples ; forasmuch as his veritable aim was never this or that victory, but the establishment of his reputation among nations, and keeping all minds bewildered by a multiplicity of deeds. And therefore he is fond of daring beginnings, to which he gives any ending that chance puts in his way, and necessity imposes on him ; and so far neither chance nor courage has failed him."²

Events proved that Machiavelli was right, and that he had

¹ In another letter of the 16th of May, 1514, he expresses the same views regarding princes : " My gossip, I know that these kings and princes are men like you and me, and I know that we do many things haphazard, even things of much import to us, and thus it may be supposed that they do likewise " (*" Opere,"* vol. viii. letter xxxii. p. 118).

² "*Opere,"* vol. viii. letter xvii. pp. 46-55. The end is wanting, so there is no date.

admirably discerned the purport of King Ferdinand's truce.¹ Vettori also speedily recognized this, writing that the letter had pleased him very much at first, and still more when it was so splendidly confirmed by after events. Nevertheless his mind was not at ease, nor did he clearly perceive what course things would take. "Let who will be conqueror, either French or Swiss, and if that is not enough, let the Turk and all Asia come, and all prophecies be fulfilled at once, for to tell you the truth, I would that what has to be should happen quickly, and besides that which I have seen, I would willingly see farther. Nor should I be surprised if within a twelvemonth the Turk were to strike a great blow at this Italy of ours, and get these priests out of the way, upon which subject I will say no more at present."²

On the 12th of July he again recurred to general politics. "I should well like to be with you, to see if, in our minds, we could set this world straight, which seems to me a very difficult affair. The Pope desires to uphold the Church without diminishing his States, excepting for the purpose of aggrandizing his nephews. And this is proved by seeing how little thought these latter take of Florence, which is a sign that they have an eye to firmer States wherein they would not always have to think of managing men. The Emperor has never shown much strength, but is still so highly esteemed by princes, that I should have to hire out my brains in order to judge him as others judge him. He leaps from this war to that, from one treaty to another, in order to attain his object, which is to possess Rome and all the States of the Church, as true and legitimate Emperor. Thus much I gather from his own words spoken in my presence and that of others.³ Spain wants to keep Castile and Naples; England is jealous of France; the Swiss, whom I rate higher than all the monarchs, desire possession of Milan. This being the state of things, I should like you to pen me a treaty of peace, stating who is to renounce part of his desires and in what fashion; since at present my chief business is to take rest, being weary of all things, even of books."⁴

Machiavelli's reply to this letter is not extant; but already on the 20th of June he had written what he thought upon the

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. letter xviii., of 20th of June, 1513.

² Ibid., vol. viii. letter xx. from Vettori, 27th of June, 1513.

³ Ibid., vol. viii. p. 66. Letter xx. Vettori's words on this subject also allude to the strange scheme attributed to the Emperor of wishing to become Pope.

⁴ Ibid., vol. viii. letter xxi. from Vettori, dated 12th of July, 1513.

question now put to him. If I were the Pope, he said, I should have made an agreement with France, Spain, and Venice, giving to the first the kingdom of Naples, to the second the Duchy of Milan, and to the third Vicenza, Verona, Padova and Treviso. "Thus Milan would be freed of a counterfeit Duke, and only the Emperor and the Swiss be displeased; but this common fear of the Germans would be the cement binding the allies together."¹ On the other hand, Vettori desired that Sforza should remain at Milan, to prevent any undue growth of the power of France, of whom, unlike Machiavelli, he was no supporter. Neither did he entertain the same fear as his friend of the power of the Swiss in Milan, for he did not expect them to plant colonies and make conquests after the fashion of the Romans: "for them it suffices to rake in booty, pocket gold and return to their own land. If France leaves Lombardy, I behold Italy at peace, and on the death of the Catholic king, the crown will descend to a son of King Frederick,² and everything will be arranged on the old terms. Otherwise there is the risk that, owing to Christian discord, the Turk may fall upon us by land and by sea, drive these priests from their sloth and other men from their pleasures; and the sooner this came about, the better it would be, for you could not believe how unwillingly I tolerate the satiety of these priests, I don't say of the Pope, for were he not a churchman he would be a great prince."³

Vettori had the same superstitious fear of the Turks that Machiavelli felt of the warlike and conquering Swiss Republic; and besides, the latter by no means believed that the withdrawal of France would be the signal for peace and union in Italy. "As to the union of the Italians, you make me laugh; first, because there will never be any union that can do any good; and even were the heads united, they could do none, for there are no troops worth a farthing excepting the Spanish, and they are too few in number to suffice; secondly, because the tails are not united to the heads. . . . As to the Swiss being contented to make a raid and then take themselves off, let me pray you not to believe it, nor encourage others to build upon such notions." "All men, especially in republics, are at first contented with self-defence; then they proceed to take the offensive, and to seek to control

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. letter xviii., of 20th of June, 1513.

² Frederick of Aragon, who died in France in 1504.

³ "Opere," vol. viii. letter xxii., from Vettori, dated 5th of August, 1513.

other men. Thus at first it was sufficient for the Swiss to defend themselves from all would-be oppressors ; then they gave their service for hire, the which has inspired them with an ambitious desire of ruling on their own account. They have now entered Lombardy under colour of re-establishing the Duke, but in fact are the rulers. At the first opportunity they will seize their pikes and act as masters, and then they will scour Italy. I know well that men like to live day by day, and do not believe that what has never been, can ever be, and always wish to reckon everything after one fashion. But, my gossip, this German torrent is so mighty that a mighty dyke is needed to stem it. We must have a care before they (the Swiss) take root and begin to taste the sweets of power, for then all Italy will be destroyed."¹

Vettori replied to Machiavelli on the 20th of August, giving him a general sketch of the state of affairs, in order again to support his own theory. "The Emperor is, as usual, hopping from war to war, and from this to that contrivance ; the Duke of Milan lets himself be carried wherever his stumbling fortunes bear him, and is like our carnival kings who know that at night they must descend to their former condition. As regards France, I was her adherent in past times, believing her to be useful to Italy and to Florence, which city I cherish above all else in the world : I love its houses, its walls, its laws, its customs, everything. Facts, however, have convinced me that the triumph of France was our hurt, and therefore I have changed my opinions. I do not, like you, think that Italians are to be considered worth no more than old iron, nor do I hold that the Swiss can ever become as the Romans were, for if you study politics well, and consider the Republics of former days, you will never find that a divided Republic like that of the Swiss is able to make any progress."²

But this was the very point that Machiavelli refused to concede, for he was full of enthusiasm for armed Republics, and still convinced that the French alliance was necessary to Italy. Nor was it easy for him even to accept the judgment of Aristotle. "We have," so he wrote on the 26th of August, "a sagacious Pope, who is also prudent, and held in respect ; an Emperor who is unstable and fickle ; a king of France who is wrathful and timid ; a king of Spain who is petty and avaricious ; the Swiss who are brutal, victorious and insolent ; our Italians who are

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. letter xxiii., 10th of August, 1513.

² Ibid., vol. viii. letter xxiv. (from Vettori), 20th of August, 1513.

poor, ambitious and cowardly ; as to the other potentates I know nothing of them. So that taking all these qualities into consideration, together with the things now hatching, I believe the friar who said *pax, pax, et non erit pax*, and I perceive that any peace is difficult, yours no less than mine. . . . But I doubt whether you can very quickly make out this king of France to be nothing, and this king of England to be a great thing. Nor can I settle in my head how it is that this Emperor should be so careless, the rest of Germany so neglectful, as to suffer the Swiss to come to such high reputation. And when I see that this is the fact, I shrink from judging anything, because this upsets every judgment that a man can form." And if I doubt, he goes on to say, of your judgment as regards France, I am certain that you are deceived in your estimation of the Swiss. "Nor do I know what Aristotle may have said of confederated Republics ; but I think rather of that which might reasonably be, that which is, and that which has been, and I remember to have read that the Lucumones held all Italy to the foot of the Alps, and until they were driven from Lombardy by the Gauls." Neither trust that the Italians will be able to do anything, for they would always have many leaders and leaders at odds among themselves. Much less, too, can they effect than the Swiss ; because you must understand that the best armies are those of armed nations, nor can these be resisted save by armies like unto their own. I certainly do not believe that the Swiss can found an empire as the Romans did, but I do believe that they may become the arbiters of Italy, and as this idea terrifies me I would fain find a remedy. "And if France suffice not, I can discern no other remedy, and will now begin to bewail with you our ruin and slavery, the which things may not come about to-day nor to-morrow, but will surely come in our time ; and Italy will give all to Pope Julius, and to those who use no remedies, if indeed there be yet time to apply them."¹

These remarks of Machiavelli pleased Vettori so much that, although he held contrary opinions, he laid before him on the 3rd of December, 1514, certain questions of contemporary politics, and at the same time gave him clearly to understand, that he hoped to do him service by exhibiting his replies to the Pope, or to the Pope's most trusted adviser. "Suppose," he said, "that France should wish to regain possession of Milan, and for that purpose should, as last year, league herself with the Venetians ; while on

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. letter xxv., 26th of August, 1513.

the other side, the Emperor, Spain, and the Swiss were to join together. What, in your opinion, ought the Pope to do in such case? Discuss and pronounce your judgment on various courses and their consequences. I know you to have so much talent, that although two years have passed since you left business, I do not think that you will have forgotten your trade."¹ Machiavelli's reply, which is undated in the printed versions, was what might easily be expected from his previous letters. "In the present state of things," he wrote, "I believe that France might conquer; indeed she would undoubtedly conquer, were she joined by the Pope, who would have all to lose and nothing to win, in case he preferred allying himself with Spain and the Swiss. Were the latter victorious, he would be at their mercy, for they desire to rule Italy, and would therefore make him their slave: on the other side he would have the Spaniards in Naples. If, instead, they were defeated, he would either have to go to Switzerland to die of starvation, or to Germany to be made a laughing stock, or to Spain to be tricked. If, in conclusion, the Pope were to join France, and the latter be victorious, I do not believe that she would hold him at ransom, since she would have to take account of the Swiss and the English still alert and still hostile. And even should the French be losers, the Pope could betake himself to their country, where he still owns a State where many of his predecessors have dwelt before him. To remain neutral would in any case be the worst course, since it would place him in the power of any one who conquered."² To this letter Machiavelli added another on the 20th of December,³ for the better elucidation of several points, and then the same day likewise sent a third, almost as a postscript, to mention that this would be a suitable moment for trying to get him some place in the Pope's service either at Florence or elsewhere.⁴ The two former letters were shown by Vettori to the Pope and to the Cardinals Medici and

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. letter xxxv. (from Vettori), 3rd of December, 1514.

² Ibid., vol. viii. letter xxxvii. An old manuscript copy of this letter has been found at Sienna, in the house of a priest named Toti, and dated, *20th of December, 1514, more fiorentino*. Professor Carlo Fossati Falletti considers the manuscript to be of the sixteenth century. The same date is also repeated in the well-known codex (lvii., 47, at p. 117) of the Barberini Library in Rome; but this must be an error, and the 10th of December the real date, since Vettori wrote on the 15th. to say that he had received the letter on the 14th. "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. No. 31.

³ Ibid., vol. viii. letter xxxviii., 20th of December, 1514.

⁴ Ibid., vol. viii. letter xxxix., also 20th of December.

Bibbiena, who all admired them ; but they led to no farther results.¹

However, this was not enough to destroy all Machiavelli's hopes ; on the contrary, he again renewed his request, but even then in vain. By the beginning of 1515 his correspondence with Vettori seems to have stopped, for we have very few letters of later years. He must have finally wearied of the promises of a friend, who had always been more lavish to him of words than deeds. And on the other hand the literary labours to which he had dedicated his compulsory leisure now kept him fully employed. We may therefore bring the first part of this biography to an end, in order to begin the second with an examination of our author's doctrines and writings. For henceforth his life was almost entirely concentrated in these. We have learnt to know him as a man of action, but have still to become better acquainted with the thinker and writer, of whom we have only seen distant and fugitive glimpses, as it were, in the foregoing chapters.

¹ Letters of Vettori, dated 15th and 30th of December, 1514, "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. Nos. 31, 32. *Vide* Italian edition, Appendix (II.), document xvii.



BOOK THE SECOND.

FROM MACHIAVELLI'S RETURN TO PRIVATE LIFE AND STUDY
DOWN TO HIS DEATH.

(1513-1527.)



CHAPTER I.

The political writers of the Middle Ages—The Guelph and Ghibelline schools—St. Thomas Aquinas and Egidio Colonna—Dante Alighieri and Marsilio da Padova—The fifteenth century—Savonarola and his treatise on the government of Florence—The learned men and their political writings—The Italian Ambassadors and their Legations—Francesco Guicciardini—His Legation in Spain, his political speeches, and his tractate "Del Reggimento di Firenze."



BEFORE examining the works of Machiavelli, and more especially those which, as all know, inaugurated a new period in the history of political science and became the subject of such great and prolonged controversy, we must make at least a rapid survey of the condition of that science in the Middle Ages, and also of its progress during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In this way we shall clearly recognize the depth of the change that political ideas and principles had already undergone, by the time Machiavelli appeared upon the scene, and shall be far better able to estimate the originality and worth of his doctrines.

The Middle Ages had had two great schools of Italian politicians, namely, the Guelph, and the Ghibelline: supporters of the Church and supporters of the Empire. Among the first, the best-renowned names were those of St. Thomas Aquinas and Egidio Colonna; among the second, and at a later period, those of Dante Alighieri and Marsilio da Padova. As in those days, the science being expounded in the Latin tongue and in scholastic form, had no national divisions, so the whole of Europe was long dominated by the same doctrines; and primarily by those which

St. Thomas and his disciple Egidio Colonna had formulated in their books, "De Regimine principum" and other works.¹ According to these doctrines, all things were necessarily subordinate to the Church and the priesthood, and secular authority and society were to render obedience to and be dependent on them. Nothing done by man in this world had any value, save as a preparation for that future life of which the secret and mystery were confided to the Church. The City of mankind must be subject and sacrificed to the City of God. History, like Nature, was the work of the Almighty, whose hand guided nations to triumph or destruction, without any power on the part of human will to check or change the predestined course of events. In the same relation as the body to the soul, as matter to mind, stood the temporal to the spiritual power. In short, the two swords, which at that time symbolized the two different powers, were to be grasped by the Vicar of Christ, whose authority came directly from God, and who was to command even the obedience of the Emperor, the representative of law and right, and purely human and earthly force. The latter, they said, resembled the moon, which has no light of its own, but receives it from the sun, to whom the Pope alone could be compared. And all writers of the Middle Ages repeated the same strange comparison, attributing to it the force of solid argument and rigorous demonstration.

In this political doctrine, morality naturally held a principal place, and all virtues were exalted and inculcated, since everything aimed at the triumph of religion. But it lacked all method and scientific character, and could not possibly be made to include them. From the first page the writer had determined the end at which he sought to arrive; his reasonings were always abstract, *a priori*, metaphysical; his conclusions were never derived from the investigation of social and historic *data*, which he considered of little or no account. And this was natural, the human element being, as it were, suppressed. In God alone, in the *arcanum* of His mind and will, was to be sought the cause of all historical events, all social transformations. Therefore, by what scientific method was it possible to subject the will of God to direct analysis? Thus the political philosopher found himself in the same condition as the physicist, who, while recognizing God as the world's creator,

¹ It is well known that the treatise bearing this title, and attributed to St. Thomas, was only his in part. See among other works Franck's "Réformateurs et publicistes." Paris, M. Lévy, 1864, p. 39 and fol.

should investigate the laws of nature, by no study of its phenomena, but by the sole contemplation and scrutiny of the Divine intellect. It was a logical necessity that this school should have the deepest contempt, not only for lay society, but also for the entire history of Pagan antiquity, in whose creed it could discern nothing but a mass of errors to be combated.

Thus, it is not surprising, that after a while a Ghibelline school should have arisen in Italy fiercely opposed to these teachings. Exactly as the Emperor had so often combated the Pope, so Ghibelline writers began to be daring supporters of the rights of the Empire. They could not become defenders of the State properly so called, namely the national State, since that was unknown to the Middle Ages, Church and Empire being equally universal; but substantially they were defenders of secular society in general. At the head of these writers stands Dante Alighieri with his volume "*De Monarchia*." With great and genuine originality he established the basis of human society on Right, to which he gave an inherent, independent value, that was also divine, since justice was willed by God, and His special attribute. Thus even the power of the Emperor was derived from God, and altogether independent of that of the Pope, who was to think solely of religion, and exact obedience in spiritual matters alone. The character, authority, and strength of the Empire—which should have its seat in Rome, and thus represent the independence of the secular world—were demonstrated by the entire history of ancient Rome. For instead of condemning this, after the example of the theological school, Dante enthusiastically admired it, and even declared it to be a lasting miracle, wrought by God to achieve the victory upon earth of a species of new chosen people. In all this there was already a foreshadowing of the approaching triumph of classical learning, and the transformation that this would necessarily accomplish in the ideas of the Middle Ages. But these new conceptions, notwithstanding their originality and daring, were still based upon thoroughly scholastic arguments. The Pope might not be compared to the sun, nor the Emperor to the moon, because the Empire and the Church were two accidental circumstances of the human race. And as man was created on the sixth day, the sun and the moon upon the fourth, it would ensue that God in creating the world must have followed an inverse and illogical order, providing for the accidental before the substantial. Most of the other arguments used by Dante in com-

bating his antagonists were of the same kind. Indeed, he merely seized, one by one, on all the school syllogisms and sophistries of his opponents, to turn those against them by the same method, without perceiving that the fact of these arguments being equally useful either *pro* or *contra*, was sufficient to prove them worthless.

Besides, he always cherished the mediæval dream of an universal Empire. For him the Emperor represented the unity of the human race, universal right and justice. He was to be Master of the entire world, for thus, having nothing more to desire or covet, he would have neither motive nor temptation ever to deviate from justice to all men. Nevertheless, as a modern writer has justly observed, Dante, while intending to write an apology of the Empire, and almost a prophecy of its renascence, wrote its epitaph instead. In fact, that which posterity has judged to be most remarkable and praiseworthy in the book "*De Monarchia*," are precisely those principles and novel tendencies which, together with the emancipation of the secular world, promoted unconsciously to the author, the destruction of the universal Empire, and the formation of the modern national State. And Henry VII. (of Germany), in whose favour he wrote, and in whom he placed such lofty hopes, may truly be said to have been the last of the mediæval Emperors.¹

But even higher than the "*Monarchia*" of Alighieri soared the bold spirit of Marsilio da Padova in his "*Defensor Pacis*," which went much farther on the same road. It is almost incomprehensible how the book of a churchman, and one completed so early as 1327, could contain ideas of so daring a nature as to be only understood and carried into effect many centuries later. Assuming the defence of Louis the Bavarian, Marsilio plunged into the conflict with an ardour that was sometimes excessive. The aim of his work was the positive subjection of the Church to the Empire. In his opinion the Emperor should have the right of assembling the Council, and of deposing prelates and Popes, who ought to be in his dependence.² Up to a certain

¹ See "*Dante e la letteratura in Italia*," in my "*Saggi di Storia, di Critica e di Politica*." Florence, Cavour Printing Office, 1868, p. 95 and fol. See also the excellent work of Mr. James Bryce, "*The Holy Roman Empire*." London, Macmillan, 1866. At page 291 the author remarks: "With Henry the Seventh ends the history of the Empire in Italy, and Dante's book is an epitaph instead of a prophecy."

² It is curious that Giuseppe Ferrari, who in his "*Corso sugli Scrittori politici*

point we may believe all this to have been rather a consequence of party spirit than the result of deep scientific conviction. But when Marsilio, in starting an examination of the various orders of human activity, tries to determine the different social functions; when he clearly establishes the distinction between legislative and executive power, thus deviating considerably from the ideas of Aristotle, who yet was his constant model, and attempts to rise almost to an organic conception of society and the State, then his originality is most undeniably displayed.¹ In his opinion, the legislative power should appertain solely to the people; since although the wisdom of the few is required to formulate laws, their labours must be sanctioned by the will of the many; by universal suffrage, which is the true basis both of the Empire and the Church. In short, the Monarchy of Marsilio is substantially an almost representative Republic, with a President elected by the people, who have equal right to depose him. The supreme authority of the Church resides only in the universality of the believers and in the Sacred Writings; and all coercive power, not only over the State, but also over heretics, is absolutely denied her. All that the Church has any right to maintain with regard to these latter is, that if they profess dangerous doctrines they will suffer the everlasting pains of Hell in the life to come. It is the function of the Monarch or Emperor to punish them in cases where their heresies become hurtful to society.

Not only by the audacity of his ideas, but also by the limpidity, order, and precision of his reasoning, Marsilio soared far above all his contemporaries, including even Dante Alighieri. His language, it is true, was still confused and mediæval; but already in his pages the syllogisms and sophistries of the schools began to lose their value; the comparison to the sun and the moon, and others of the same kind, although not entirely absent, had neither the effect of confusing his intelligence, nor the logical march of his arguments. His work allows us to trace the transition between the scholastic lore and an independent political science, worked out by the visibly humanistic tendency of his mind. Nevertheless

Italiani" (Milano, Manini, 1862), mentions with sometimes exaggerated praise all the defenders of Ghibelline ideas, should never speak of Marsilio da Padova, who was their principal champion.

¹ Neander in speaking of Marsilio's work, says: "Dieses in der That epochemachende Werk" ("Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Religion und Kirche").

we cannot join in the extreme praise accorded to him by certain German critics, although their opinion is of great weight. They have not been content with proclaiming Marsilio da Padova to be a precursor of the Reformation by his ideas upon the Church ; a precursor of the eighteenth-century spirit by his conception of the primal source of all power being with the people ; and a precursor of the principles for which modern society is still combating, by his theory of the absolute dominion to be assigned to the State over the Church ;¹ they have also tried to discover in his "*Defensor Pacis*" the conception of the modern State, no longer universal but national. And this because Marsilio started the question whether there should be one universal monarchy or whether there should be different States, according to the geographical and ethnographical conditions of different populations, and although the only answer he gave to the question was that it was an argument foreign to the theme of his book. But what then is the theme of the "*Defensor Pacis*" ? An inquiry into the origin of the discord and contention prevalent in the world, in consequence of excessive ecclesiastical pretensions ; to all of which the writer could perceive but one remedy—*i.e.* the total submission of the Church to the Empire. Therefore it was still the old struggle and the old mediæval dispute. Certainly the query propounded to himself by Marsilio, as to whether Monarchy should or should not be universal, proves that although he still belonged to the Middle Ages, he sought to escape from them. Nor can we presuppose the discovery of a new principle in a reply that was really nothing more than a simple reticence.

In short, although Marsilio may justly be called a prophet of the future, he was still bound to the Middle Ages and to the scholastic method. Not only was it a mediæval struggle in which he was plunged and for which he wielded his pen, but his method was constantly that of an abstract, arid, and metaphysical idealism ; and his knowledge of history was in no degree superior, indeed often inferior, to the common acquirement of his times. He lacked the historic faculty, and had no conception of the natural development of institutions, which in his book seemed to be outside the boundaries both of time and space. The principal source of his wisdom was always Aristotle, whom he endeavoured to bring into harmony with the Scriptures ; and this was undoubtedly the

¹ Bezold and Riezler speak of this in the works that we shall have occasion to quote farther on.

chief characteristic of scholastic teachings. The Italian Republics already erected into independent petty States, and the culture originated by them, had a considerable share in the formation of Marsilio's intellect and Marsilio's ideas. But these ideas came to him in the shape of convictions and feelings which may have been prophetic visions of the future, but were no results of a new scientific method, and still less of positive investigation of facts. His was a good Monarchy, such as was necessary at all times, and in all places; I might almost say that it was the abstract triumph of right and justice. Although finding its proper basis in the popular conscience, which is certainly an original thought of the author, nevertheless both Marsilio's people and Marsilio's monarch were still no better than abstractions. For thinkers of the Guelph school, the State was merged in the universal Church, for Marsilio, the Church became a function of the Empire, which, his reticences notwithstanding, always remained universal and abstract. Thus even the Ghibelline school, with all the daring and originality of its supporters, never succeeded in effecting its emancipation from the scholastic and theological method; was always in search of an ideal, metaphysical government; never dedicated itself to the study of any society in particular, in order to discover that which would be preferable and practical in a concrete case. Neither did it seek to define the special conditions of the Empire in the age of which it treated, for it aimed at an immutable form of excellent government, to be applied to all, without any consideration, or limits of place or time.¹

Yet this was exactly what began to attract the attention of the

¹ Among those who have examined the above-mentioned writers, and the questions connected with their principal works with most thoroughness and exactitude, the following should be consulted:—A. Franck, "*Réformateurs et publicistes de l'Europe*," Paris, 1864; Sigmund Riezler, "*Die Literarischen Widersucher der Päpste zur Zeit Ludwig des Baiers*," Leipzig, 1874; F. von Bezold, "*Die Lehre von der Volkssouveränität, während des Mittelalters*" in the "*Historische Zeitschrift*" of H. von Sybel, year viii., No. iv. Munich, 1876. See too vol. i. of Robert Mohl's work, "*Die Geschichte und Literatur der Staatswissenschaften*," in three vols. Erlangen, 1853-58. Gregorovius, in his "*History of Rome*," also furnishes important remarks and notices. In conclusion we may quote an essay presented by Paul E. Meyer to the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Strasburg, the 25th of May, 1870: "*Etude sur Marsile de Padoue*," Strasbourg, Silbermann, 1870. This essay contains a careful exposition of the writings of Marsilio, of whom Meyer seems to be no great admirer. He chiefly dwells upon the fact that Marsilio, in subjecting the Church to the State, does not distinguish either their different attributes or their aims.

Italian political writers of the fifteenth century. It is remarkable to note how, at that time, the entire political science of the Middle Ages seemed to have suddenly disappeared and another arisen totally differing from it both in substance and form. Yet there was nothing surprising in this when we consider that not only men's ideas had altered at that period, but that society itself was changed. Scholastic lore had been succeeded by erudition; the mediæval authority of a universal Church, an universal Empire, seemed now little more than a memory of the past; the Italian Republics, by the work of party-leaders, were going through a process of transformation in which the hand of man, the effects of prudence, astuteness, deceit and courage were only too plainly to be seen. Originally composed of numerous associations clumsily welded together, our Republics had been dependent on the Church or the Empire; but little by little they had achieved independence in every corner of the Peninsula, and later were rapidly changed into the principalities of tyrants who destroyed their liberty by the commission of every species of crime. Nevertheless, these tyrants also created the embryo models of the modern States which were afterwards erected in Europe, and to which Italy taught the new system of politics that became an accomplished fact long before science succeeded in formulating it. At the same time the study of antiquity evoked in men's minds a presentment of the Pagan State, which, particularly as manifested in the history of Rome, succeeded by force of its vigorous unity, in bringing the individual, religion and everything else into subjection to itself. In this way the example of resuscitated antiquity helped to explain and illustrate the conception already embodied in the actualities of public life.

Nevertheless, the old mediæval science did not altogether vanish at once; it long lingered hidden in cloisters, and certain of its ideas occasionally percolated even into the new science. Thus, for instance, we find that there survived nearly everywhere the idea of an excellent prince, an idea that, supported by the double authority of the ancients and of the schoolmen, has in various shapes descended almost to our own times. Individual rule, when good, is the best of governments, as when bad it is the worst. This in the fifteenth century seemed to all an incontrovertible maxim. In fact, perfection is unity, cried the schools, and the neoplatonism of Ficino repeated the same cry

with even greater emphasis. As there is only one God in the world, one sun in the planetary system, one head in the human and animal organism, so society requires unity, and finds perfection in the good monarch, who is almost the likeness of God, and can alone bestow good government on society.

Readers wishing to contrast these ideas in their purely mediæval shape with those which next arose and convinced every one, should study the treatise entitled "*Del Reggimento del governo della città di Firenze*," written by Savonarola, when he was superintending the organization of the new Republic. He expounds the conception of the good prince in a thoroughly scholastic manner, and describes the happiness of mankind under the rule of such a prince. He then proceeds to describe the same government under a bad prince, and draws a graphic portrait of the tyrant, whom he tries to render as odious as possible, thus following the example of Aristotle and St. Thomas. But he afterwards abruptly remarks, that as men's wits are keen in Florence, a tyrant would be more hurtful there than elsewhere, and hence a Republic alone can be adapted to the nature of that people and yield good fruit ; it is therefore willed by God. The force of every theory, of all abstract reasoning, disappears before a question of simple expediency ; and the writer goes on to treat of the manner of founding a Republic with Gonfalonier and Signory, with a Council of Eighty, and above all with a Great Council as in Venice, where it had produced such excellent results. Here, therefore, we have a practical policy, derived solely from examination of the actual conditions of Florence and the temper of its people ; and we have it side by side and almost contrasted with the abstract policy of the Middle Ages, of which it was totally independent. But this was the work of Savonarola, who was a monk, and in whose mind there was a perpetual conflict between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance ; whereas his contemporaries followed the new path, seeking for that which could be practically carried out, without at all troubling themselves concerning other things.

Whoever is really desirous of examining the natural transition from the one school to the other, is inevitably led to study the political writings of the learned men ; and is soon compelled to pronounce them equally inferior to those of their predecessors, the schoolmen, as to those of their successors the *Cinquecentisti*. It is beyond all doubt that the literature of the Humanists pro-

duced, by the example of the Ancients, a new intellectual training, and inevitably paved the way for the examination of social facts on purely human and natural grounds. Both their letters and their books of travel abound in admirable descriptions of the manners and institutions of different peoples, together with valuable remarks on the causes of their decadence and regeneration. We no longer meet with the eternal explanation of the hand of the Almighty guiding nations as a skilful driver may guide his fiery steeds; for now instead the writer sought and found the explanation of the facts he noted, in the temper of men, in their vices and in their virtues. Indeed, this new tendency of the mind may be said to be the sole genuinely original quality of the learned men, as political writers. For if we read the few treatises they have bequeathed us on this branch of knowledge, we find them to be rather collections of classical phrases regarding the virtues and vices of men in general and princes in particular, than genuine and special scientific tractates. Of this nature were certain of the works of Panormita, Platina, and many others.

Jacopo Pontano was not only a scholar of vast learning and a noble writer of Latin verse, but also a most sagacious politician and statesman, one of the chief ministers at the court of Ferdinand of Aragon, and hence well experienced in the management of weighty affairs. Yet what has he to tell us in his book "*De Principe*"? That the prince should love justice and respect the Gods; be liberal, affable, clement, an enemy of flatterers, faithful to his word, strong, prudent, practised in the chase and in the use of arms; that above all, he should be the friend and patron of men of letters. Who can fail to perceive that this dissertation was nothing more than an exercise in rhetoric, when he proceeds to relate seriously to us how Pope Calixtus III., when threatened by Jacopo Piccinini, exclaimed that he had nothing to fear, since Rome contained three thousand *litterati*, whose counsels and wisdom would enable him to repulse any army, however formidable!

And what does Poggio Bracciolini teach us in his dialogue "*De infelicitate Principum*"? That power and external prosperity cannot give man true happiness, which, indeed, only virtue can confer; and therefore it is necessary to pursue virtue rather than riches or power. He quotes historical examples to prove that the greatest monarchs were unable to avoid unhappiness. If a

prince be bad, then he certainly cannot be happy ; if good, then he is unhappy by reason of the heavy responsibilities, the infinite anxieties and troubles by which he is oppressed. Felicity, therefore, is only to be found in the dwellings of private citizens, who understand the worship of true philosophy. Who can imagine all this to be political science? Yet in the travels of the same Poggio, we meet with very admirable remarks, on the customs and institutions of England and Germany, similar to many to be found in the writings of Piccolomini, and numerous other learned men. In the diplomatic epistles of Pontano, all readers can recognize a high degree of practical sense and political insight. No one would suppose them to be written by the author of the tractates.

It was, indeed, in this way that the new science of politics gradually took shape. Erudition merely supplied the intellectual training necessary to create the science ; but the first dawns of the science itself were visible in the epistles and reports of ambassadors and statesmen, who, during the last decades of the fifteenth and the first of the sixteenth centuries, went on multiplying in a truly singular manner. In the despatches of Ferdinand of Aragon, signed by Pontano ; in those of the Florentine ambassadors at the time of the coming of Charles VIII. ; in those of the Venetians, and in their famous "*Relazioni*," as more or less in all the diplomatic writings of Italian governments and embassies, we find ourselves in a thoroughly new world. These writers had forsaken the Latin tongue ; they no longer knew anything of scholastic doctrines ; they observed and studied men and men's political institutions with marvellous acumen, and with the most consummate experience. They investigated the causes of events, and of the conduct of statesmen upon a truly inductive and experimental method, which suddenly appeared common to all, without it being possible to say by whom it was first introduced, since it was in fact discovered by the nation at large. From time to time we meet with a few general considerations, always showing admirable clearness and penetration ; but the narrative of special and urgent facts is speedily resumed, together with the discussion of the most secret items of intelligence, by which the minds of these writers were constantly preoccupied. In short, we may say that, in these official reports the form and method of the new science can already be discerned, although as yet only visible in detached fragments, almost seeming to ask to be woven together.

As a natural sequence, attempts were made to collect the scattered leaves of a doctrine that had sprung up among the affairs and realities of life, almost as the inevitable result of the new method of observing and studying the world. And this doctrine only required scientific arrangement and exposition in order to manifest its full splendour. Thus, it seemed to leap forth into sudden maturity, and as though unexpectedly sprung from the head of Jupiter, whereas, in truth, it had passed through long and laborious preparation.

For accurate knowledge of this school and its doctrines, it is requisite to give attentive study to the political works of Francesco Guicciardini. In these we find it even more clearly described and defined than in those of Machiavelli, for the latter, by force of the creative originality of his genius, introduced a personal element into it, and gave it his own stamp; whereas Guicciardini's originality, although doubtless considerable, was devoted to giving an exact and most lucid shape to the current doctrines of his day. These he developed, arranged, and enriched with the results of his prodigious experience, his large knowledge of men and public affairs, and with a degree of exactitude in observing, remembering, and recording facts, even superior to that of Machiavelli. For the latter was unduly absorbed in spinning theories and pursuing visionary ideals.

Like his contemporary and senior Machiavelli, Guicciardini began his career as political writer with ambassadorial reports. His first mission was to Spain; it was there that he gained his real initiation into the management of public affairs, and also composed a few other short works. He was sent there in 1511, when still under the legal age of thirty years; but he had already pursued a long course of accurate study, and given proof of his admirable talent in his *History of Florence*, which has only been published in our own day. His Spanish mission was of little importance, since he was merely sent to offer friendly protestations for the purpose of calming the suspicions of the King, and had nothing to do beyond observing, collecting, and reporting intelligence. Besides this, his keen wits warned him of the changes so soon to take place in Florence; and being very anxious to avoid compromising himself in any way, he always sought to keep to generalities. From the beginning, he announced that Ferdinand the Catholic was decided to carry on no operations against the Pope; he described the plans conceived, and afterwards

abandoned, of again sending the Great Captain to Italy, when the state of things seemed desperate for Spain ; he narrated the coming of the English, and their displeasure when the King treacherously seized Navarre on his own account, and furnished many useful, clear, and detailed notices on the country and its government, which at once proved his marvellous faculty of observation.¹ These notices, however, are nearly always unconnected, being collected and recorded in a desultory way, and from time to time, as occasion required, without any effort on the author's part to arrange them in such order as to give a general and distinct conception of the general state of things, and of the character of the prince and the people, as Machiavelli constantly endeavoured to do in his reports. And this instantly marks the two writers' difference of temperament.

At this time Guicciardini also wrote for his own pleasure a "*Relazione di Spagna*," in which he tried to record and collect the principal observations occurring to him during his residence in that country, and in this composition also he followed the analytical method. He found the country to be thinly populated, with neither villages nor castles between one great city and another, but only waste lands. He had a very bad opinion of the Spaniards, who were, he said, proud of their nation, greedy of money, avaricious, little inclined to work, without industry, without literary culture, and were above all cunning and false. "Being cunning," he continued, "they make capital thieves. . . . Dissimulation is proper to this nation . . . and this dissimulation generates ceremonies and huge hypocrisy." It is certainly strange to hear so bitter a charge of craft and dissimulation from the lips of an Italian politician of the Borgian age, who at a later period was himself accused by his fellow citizens of the betrayal of his country. He recognizes the grand military qualities of the Spaniards, whom he finds most agile and daring ; he has no great esteem for their men-at-arms, but praises their light cavalry, and speaks in the highest terms of the foot soldiers, who indeed afterwards at the battle of Ravenna proved themselves equal to the Swiss soldiery, then thought to be the best in the world. But this great military valour of Spain stirs him to no enthusiasm, nor even leads him to draw any general conclusions as to the present state or probable future of the nation, or its strength and

¹ "*La Legazione di Spagna*" (1512-13) in the "*Opere Inedite*" of F. Guicciardini, vol. vi.

inevitable destiny in the world. One day he inquired of King Ferdinand : How it was that so warlike a nation had always been conquered either entirely or in part, "by Gauls and Romans, Carthaginians, Vandals, and Moors?" The nation, replied the king, is very skilled in war, but is disorderly,¹ so that it can only do great deeds when ruled by one able to keep it in order and united. This, in fact, as Guicciardini rightly observes, was what Ferdinand and Isabella had done : they had humbled the grandees, suppressed revolutions, gathered into their own hands the extraordinary power wielded by the three knightly orders, and were thus enabled to urge Spain to great military enterprises. And in these Ferdinand had the singular good fortune of always making war with a semblance of justice, excepting only in the case of the iniquitous partition of the kingdom of Naples, for which there was neither excuse nor pretext of any sort.

From this it is evident that, as if of itself, a general conception was being formed of the real strength of Spain in those days, and of the extreme value of the national policy pursued by Ferdinand and Isabella. But Guicciardini does not follow it out ; on the contrary, after an admirable analysis of special facts, he attributes the great results obtained rather to the monarch's good fortune than to his prudence or the military capabilities of his people.² Thus all is scattered in desultory remarks, and the "Relazione" itself is composed of detached paragraphs. Occasionally we find inserted in the "Ricordi," which are a collection of separate thoughts, a few general considerations that, if incorporated in the "Relazione," would have given it greater unity, by plainly showing how the rule of Ferdinand of Aragon testified to his consummate sagacity as well as luck. For Guicciardini observes in these "Ricordi" that whenever the king wished to undertake a war, he first of all inspired a strong desire for it throughout the country so as to appear almost compelled to make it,³ and thus persuaded every one that his only motive was the public good, even when he was acting from personal interest, or mere kingly ambition.⁴ But this remark, being isolated and uttered as it were *à propos* to nothing, loses much of its general value. Thus, at

¹ Not very different was the reply, a few years ago, of a Spaniard to the questions of De Amicis : Ours is a fine nation, he said, but it has no government. De Amicis, "Spagna." Florence, Barbèra, 1878.

² "Relazione di Spagna" in the "Opere Inedite," vol. vi. pp. 271-97.

³ "Opere Inedite," vol. i. "Ricordi," lxxvii. and cclxxiii.

⁴ Ibid., vol. i. "Ricordi," cxlii.

every step we have occasion to notice the great difference between Guicciardini's gifts and those of Machiavelli, although, in certain aspects, they have many points of resemblance. The latter is a less patient observer ; is less precise, less accurate, but he has the very rare faculty of instantly discerning, among a thousand facts falling under his notice, that which is really the principal point, and fixing his attention upon it. We have before seen how directly he found himself among the Swiss, their "free freedom," armed population, and simple habits served him as a starting-point whence to measure the strength and predict the fortunes of those miniature Republics. Also, when speaking to us of France and Germany, we have always beheld him seeking by the investigation of leading facts, what may almost be styled the specific weight, both political and military, of either nation, and by study of the present trying to divine the probabilities of the future. Guicciardini had no inclination for similar researches or predictions, and was disposed to regard them as idle speculations.

The object that he held constantly in view was the useful and practical solution, in public as in private life, of difficulties of actual occurrence, without troubling himself in the least as to possibilities more or less remote. With regard to the long meditated precepts dictated by his knowledge and experience, he followed them chiefly for the attainment of personal ends. From Spain he maintained a vigilant watch over Italian and especially Florentine events, of which his relations and friends continually kept him informed. When, however, the government of Florence was changed, and the enemies of the fallen republic (that had sent him to Spain to seek help against those very enemies) renewed his ambassadorial powers, he gladly accepted the fresh mandate. He even begged his father and brother to let him know the names of the new men in power, in order to gain their favour by offering his congratulations ; and he accordingly wrote to all the Medici, and more especially to Leo X. as soon as the latter was chosen Pope. A rare master of the art of suiting himself to the times, it causes us no little astonishment to find in the "Memoirs," written by him at the age of thirty, and never intended for publication, a species of religious exhortation addressed to himself, in which he urged himself to lead a worthier life ; to make a good use of the gifts received from God, and of the lofty offices conferred upon him by his fellow-citizens ; and to observe such conduct in spiritual matters, "that God in His loving-kindness may bestow

on thee that share of Paradise, that thou thyself desirest in the world."¹ In reality, however, it is evident that even in this matter he wished to behave with such prudence as to enjoy both this world and the next without making any sacrifice.

Of his easy mutability we find proofs in two of the various "Discorsi" written by him in Spain. In the first, composed shortly before the battle of Ravenna, he discusses the method of reorganizing and strengthening the popular government of Florence; in the other, written soon after, that is, just on the return of the Medici, he treats instead of the method of strengthening and establishing their power.² In the first he begins by remarking, that the temper and corrupt living of the Florentines were ill-adapted to a good Republic; and that to make the citizens what they should be, "it would be requisite to mass all things together, giving them an entirely new shape, even as in manipulating substances to be eaten in a paste."³ Nevertheless, granting things to be as they are, he seeks for the most judicious measures. Above all he would have a good militia, effecting improvements in that Ordinance which had been instituted after much opposition and earned universal applause, but regarding which he had never entertained the same lofty visions as Machiavelli. In his judgment, "government was based upon force; and to desire a government without arms was to desire an army without its proper weapons; since State and dominion are nothing more than violence done to subjects, though palliated in some cases by certain pretensions to honesty."⁴ Also, liberty is nothing more than the preponderance of public law and order over the appetites of individual men; therefore it should have for its basis a General Council, wherein the assembled citizens could sanction laws and elect their magistrates. This latter function was then, in the eyes of all Italian politicians, the true and only safeguard of every free government. All depended upon arranging matters in such wise that the election of magistrates might be conducted in the best mode for the public good; and therefore all kinds of ingenious devices were invented to secure it from corruption. To this end Guicciardini proposed the admission to the Council even of those who, owing to their youth or other reasons, were legally incompetent for office; since such men being unable to bargain with

¹ "Opere Inedite," vol. x. p. 89. These words were written, as he noted: "In Spagna l'anno 1513." (In Spain, year 1513.)

² Ibid., vol. ii. p. 263.

³ Ibid., vol. ii. p. 262 and fol.

⁴ Ibid., vol. ii. p. 267.

others on their own account, would be disinterested and would give impartial votes.¹

It was then thought that another main foundation of liberty consisted in granting equality to all citizens, and to all the right of sharing in the government ; and accordingly Guicciardini and every Italian politician of the period declared it essential that public offices should be held in rotation, and, save with certain exceptions, never in perpetuity. For concerns being various, and various the ambitions that of necessity must be appeased, offices and their tenure should also be varied. Hence, first of all he would have a perpetual Gonfalonier : "since even in natural things there is seen to be perfection in the single number."² Here we have a distant allusion to philosophical and abstract theories ; but Guicciardini does not follow it up. He was unversed in scholastic learning, and had no love for philosophy ; had been trained in jurisprudence, on which, however, he rarely touched in his political works, and soon reverted therefore to practical questions. The present moment, the passing hour, actual possibilities, were the points on which his attention was continually fixed. Hence his desire that the perpetual Gonfalonier should be kept in check by a Signory, invested with great authority, and by a Senate composed of from 160 to 180 citizens, some for life, some for fixed periods ; the former, in order that they might have lengthened experience, the latter in order to preclude all excess of power, and that many might be raised in turn to the Senatorial dignity. On this point he proved himself superior to the prejudices of his day, and even to the traditions of the school to which he belonged. As is generally known, it had always been strictly prohibited in the Councils of the Florentine Republic to combat any law that was proposed. To vote against it was allowed, or to speak and vote in its favour ; but speaking against a law was forbidden under penalty of exile or imprisonment. Guicciardini, on the contrary, had the sagacity to declare that, although it might be dangerous to allow free discussion in the Great Council, where numbers might cause confusion, it was not only necessary but advantageous in the Senate ; and that its constant prohibition in Florence had been tyranny, instead of liberty. Discussion might give birth to maturer deliberations, would bring the best men to the front, and confer on them the power they deserved. "And what," he exclaimed, at last giving

¹ "Opere Inedite," vol. ii. pp. 270, 271.

² Ibidem, p. 272.

way to a burst of enthusiasm, "what can a generous mind better desire, than to find himself at the head of a free city, and to have reached that position solely by having gained a reputation for prudence and patriotism? Happy the Republics which teem with ambitions such as these, for of necessity, qualities leading to these honours will flourish among them, namely, virtues and good works."¹

Substantially, the government desired by Guicciardini was nothing more than a machinery by which it was sought to balance different ambitions, and cause the advantages of a monarchy, an aristocracy, and a democracy to exercise a reciprocal action by means of the Gonfalonier, Senate, and Great Council. It was the mixed government, the dream and quest of all our political writers, to whom it had been bequeathed by the ancients, and particularly by Polybius,² although they endeavoured to modify it in various ways, according to the varied conditions of our Republics. That the government should be adapted to the nature of the people for which it was intended, was a conviction that had grown general during the Renaissance. But it had not yet been discovered that a government must be the spontaneous outcome of the popular history and the popular conscience, and that in order to impose it upon society, more was required than for it to have been first harmoniously arranged in the brains of men of thought. Neither was it understood that it was a mistaken idea to regard the political life of a nation and its government as a simple game of personal passions and interests which were either to be bridled or satisfied. Donato Giannotti, one of the purest of Florentine patriots, and one of the last representatives of this school, passed his entire life in studying the mechanism of Venetian government, in order to use its example for the benefit of that of Florence, which he minutely describes to us. But he had an unvarying standard of selection and reform, holding that institutions should be moulded and ordered in such wise as to satisfy all ambitions, the which ambitions and passions were for him solely and wholly political. Some men, he says, desire to stand in the front rank; others, and in greater number, are content with some share of power and authority; while the majority desire equality, liberty, and justice. Hence the necessity of tempering democracy with aristocracy and monarchy;

¹ "Opere Inedite," vol. ii. pp. 303, 304.

² In the fragments of bk. vi. of the "Storie."

therefore the Gonfalonier must be held in check by the Signory, Senate, and Great Council.¹ Such were the arguments at that time continually repeated by all.

Guicciardini, however, had a far more penetrating vision, and far wider brain than Giannotti and many others; and accordingly did not fail to observe the weak side of all these theories and the insufficiency of this method. Indeed, from time to time he shook off the swathing bands of the schools, and displayed ideas of higher elevation and daring resembling unexpected flashes of light. Nevertheless, his indifference, disgust, and almost contempt for all theories speedily threw him back in the beaten path from which he so seldom strayed, but whereon he contrived to gather many true and subtle observations upon mankind and its institutions. At the close of his discourse he again reiterates that in reality all depends upon the nature and character of the people, hence that no reforms can be successfully effected in Florence, unless it were first possible to radically improve the Florentines. By the measures he proposed, all that could be achieved would be a barely tolerable Republic; "to render it thoroughly good, would need," he tells us, "the blade of Lycurgus, in order to extirpate our weakness, our greed for gain, and vainglory, as these were extirpated by Lycurgus in Sparta. This, however, is a thing we may admire or wish, but cannot hope to obtain for ourselves." And he again recurs to small reforms, concluding by suggesting a law against feminine luxury, and another for the reduction of marriage dowries, the laws so frequently but fruitlessly proposed and sanctioned in the Republic of Florence.²

The other discourse, written in October, 1512, treats of the state of parties in Florence, and the method of firmly establishing the government of the Medici, whose triumph had been already effected.³ These men (the Medici), says Guicciardini, may not longer hope to win the goodwill of a people so long enamoured of liberty, therefore they must devote themselves to forming a narrow circle of secure and trusty friends, among whom they may divide the highest offices, and on whom they may confer such favours as to make their fate inseparable from that of the new governments. Soderini had fallen through trying to rule a Republic by means and methods opposed to liberty, namely by concentrating the

¹ Giannotti, "Opere." Florence, Le Monnier, 1850, two vols.

² "Opere Inedite," vol. ii. pp. 311, 312.

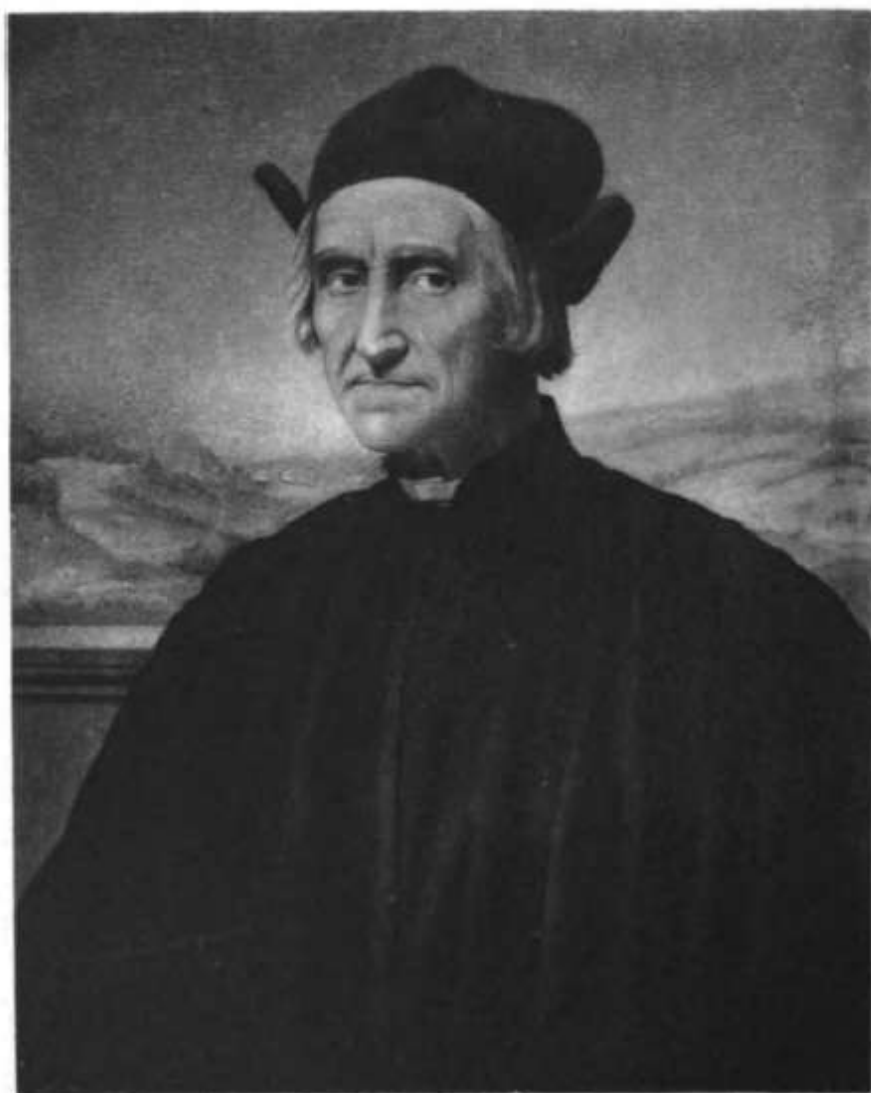
³ Ibid., "Discorso" iv. pp. 316-24.

government in the hands of a few adherents ; in the same way the Medici would fall, should they persist in ruling in a manner suited to a free government, namely by allowing many to participate in the administration, with the hope of thus gaining the suffrage and support of the mass of the citizens.

Perusal and comparison of these two discourses lead to the inquiry : whether Guicciardini was a republican or a friend of the Medici, a supporter of freedom or of tyranny ? To himself this would have seemed an empty question. His science, his art of living in the world, consisted in successfully making his way under any government, and he tells us this plainly and unhesitatingly. His discourses, his meditations, all aimed, through study of men and things, towards the discovery of a sure means of keeping that way constantly open. In the retirement of his study and with pen in hand, when writing for his own satisfaction and without any thought for the public, he openly acknowledged to himself that of course liberty was preferable to despotism, and was naturally desired by men. He perceived that in Florence no government, save that of a popular Republic, could be established without violence ; and for this reason he told the Medici that to assure their power they must use force. Neither his own character, inclinations, nor mental training inclined him to place confidence in the people, and he would have therefore preferred to give a restricted form even to the Republic, by entrusting it to a few *ottimati*. And this is another point upon which Guicciardini constantly differed from Machiavelli, who was always opposed to the *ottimati*.

The same ideas are still more clearly expressed in the treatise " Del Reggimento di Firenze." ¹ This title, however, must not lead the reader to suppose that it contains a development of the author's general theory of government, it merely serves, on the contrary, for the ampler exposition, in more logical and scientific order, of the ideas comprised in the first discourse to which we have referred. It is a dialogue, composed indeed at a much later period, but feigning to have been held in the year 1494, after the expulsion of the Medici, between their ardent partizan Bernardo del Nero, Piero Guicciardini, the writer's father, Paolo Antonio Soderini, and Piero Capponi. The preface opens with an apology for writing in favour of a free government, after having served Leo X. and Clement VII., and accepted benefits at their hands. But the resolves and desires of men are different, he says, from con-

¹ " Opere Inedite," vol. ii. pp. 1-223.



BERNARDO DEL NERO.

(A supposed portrait, attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, from the original in the Torrigiani Gallery, Florence.)



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siderations on the nature of things ; truth stands on a footing of its own, and duties towards our country are in all cases greater than those to private individuals. This work also was among those only published in our own day, and it is really singular that a man so self-interested and ambitious as Guicciardini should have had a love of letters, sufficiently lively and disinterested to lead him to compose so many works, with no object beyond the gratification of a purely intellectual need. But it is exactly this that enhances the value of these works in the eyes of all who wish to comprehend the writer's real opinions and convictions.

The dialogue therefore starts by noting, as usual, that the best government is that of a single ruler when the ruler is worthy, and then quickly digresses from this theory, with a remark from one of the interlocutors, to the effect that in Florence there were only the Medici from whom it would be impossible to hope for any good thing, since they had seized upon the government by fraud and violence and against the will of the people. At this point Bernardo del Nero, the same who in 1497 was condemned to death for conspiring in their favour, assumes the defence of the Medici and of principalities in general. He says that he cares neither to know nor dispute upon the species of government ; but that he rather seeks to know what effects it has brought about where it has been established, inasmuch as governments are intended for the welfare of the citizens at large, not to satisfy the ambitions of those in command or desirous of command. Cities were instituted for the common good, and their chief bond consists in the mutual goodwill of the citizens for whom justice is the primary and principal necessity. Men are by nature inclined to good, when undistracted by self-interest ; and if a few lapse into purposeless evil, these few deserve to be called beasts rather than men. Now a popular government, continues Bernardo del Nero, cannot be the best adapted to the above end, since it is always weak, uncertain and liable to change, whereas a principality is stronger, readier, more secret in the conduct of affairs, and also more intelligent, prudence being a virtue of the few, not of the many. Other interlocutors combat his assertions on the score that government is thus restricted to mere utility and private interest. Justice, they add, is not all sufficient ; honour and glory must also be sought.

But they do not long enlarge upon this or other theoretical arguments, and soon go back to blaming the conduct of the Medici, the many evils inflicted by them upon Florence, and the

greater evils they would inflict if recalled after having been driven away. And on this question of expediency, the only one by which the speakers are roused to any true fervour, they all come to an agreement. Bernardo del Nero, in fact, winds up by saying : "At any rate the Medici have been expelled, and we cannot wish them back again ; for even had they once been worthy they would return unworthy. Let us then seek for the best form of popular government, the only kind now opportune and possible in Florence." After this he begins to expound and argue in favour—though with some slight modifications—of the same form of Republic that we have seen proposed in the first discourse examined by us. Three things, he adds, must be mainly kept in view ; namely, justice for all, defence of freedom and mature deliberation on questions of the highest importance. Accordingly a Great Council, with power of election to supreme offices, is what above all is required. And in order to prevent the more ambitious from seeking popular favour both by honest and dishonest means, the choice of the *Ganfalonier* should not be left to the Council, but merely the right of suggesting three names to the Senate, who would then make the final choice. The Senate was to be composed of one hundred and fifty sagacious and prudent members, with full liberty of discussing and maturing their decrees. And thus Del Nero's exposition goes on, but, to avoid repeating things already mentioned, need not be given here.

Then follow a few remarks on the history of Rome and its civil wars, showing that Guicciardini had given keen and prolonged attention to that difficult subject. At the close of the dialogue we once more meet with a few considerations which again and still more clearly prove that at the bottom of his soul he still entertained certain grave doubts as to the very basis of his doctrines, and that he avoided dwelling much upon these doubts, because he saw no practical use in their full discussion, when unable to find a scientific issue. In speaking with Piero Capponi of the Pisan war, Bernardo del Nero observes, that the Florentines will never succeed in winning the friendship of the Pisans, and therefore, in order to reduce them, they ought either to kill all prisoners, or at least keep them in confinement until the war came to an end ; and that they should take no alarm even if, in reprisal, the same fate were inflicted on their own soldiers. This advice, he says, may appear cruel and unconscientious, and is so in truth. "But whoever in these days wishes to maintain States and dominions,

should, when possible, act with mercy and goodness ; but whenever this is not possible, with cruelty and remorselessness. And for this reason thy great grandfather Gino wrote in those last "Records" of his : that the Council of Ten for war should always be composed of persons who loved their country better than their souls ;¹ because it is impossible to regulate government and States, if desirous of maintaining them as they are at present maintained, according to the precepts of Christian law. Certainly," he continues, "no good reason can be alleged wherefore in the one case conscience may be obeyed, while in the other it may be disregarded. And this I have desired to say, not indeed to pronounce judgment on these very difficult points, since he who wishes to live entirely after God, may do ill in not withdrawing afar from the life of the world, and may live badly according to the world without offending God ; but to speak as the nature of things truly requires, since occasion has drawn us into an argument, that may be fittingly carried on between us, but could neither be discussed with others, nor in a larger company."²

In this chapter, therefore—after starting from the point in which all was subordinated to morality, justice, and religion, but all remained in the abstract without taking into consideration either real events, history, or the nature of mankind and society—we have arrived at another point, in which political science is founded on a rational examination of these facts, but is brought into contradiction with religion and morals, thus leaving a profound dissonance in the mind of man, who has but one conscience and cannot have two. This dissonance, begun in the fifteenth century, has endured to the present time ; since we have not entirely succeeded in suppressing it either in practice or in theory. The Middle Ages had solved the arduous problem, by sacrificing the earthly to the heavenly home ; but the doctrine of the Middle Ages was an abstraction, taking no heed of reality, and lacking all efficacy in guiding the conduct of men or governments, which

¹ "Ricordi di Gino di Neri Capponi in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*," tom. xviii. Mediolani, 1731, col. 1149 : "Choose for the Ten of Balia practical men who love the Commune better than their own welfare and their own souls." The good Muratori holds that these words savour of impiety, *impietatem sapiunt*, and therefore tries to believe that the word soul is here used "*ad significandam aut more Hebræorum vitam, aut intensiorem et delicatorem illum animæ curam*" (Præf. col. 1101). But the same words, in their true and clear signification, as they are here interpreted by Guicciardini, are also reported in Machiavelli's "Storie."

² Guicciardini, "Opere Inedite," vol. ii. pp. 210-12.

both remained ferocious and bloodthirsty, while listening to the exhortations of theological mysticism. The fifteenth century, on the other hand, tried to follow the dictates of experience, and let itself be ruled by reason, as represented to its eyes by the philosophy of the ancients. Accordingly so long as it was only a question of private virtue or of virtue in the abstract, the fifteenth century, by means of neo-Platonism, succeeded in bringing Christianity and antiquity into harmony with each other, namely, by finding a rational and natural basis for that which religion had imposed only as a divine and revealed command. And this seemed a great triumph. But on coming to the examination of public and political virtues, the dissonance was speedily made clear. Antiquity gave the idea of the State, exalted country and freedom, prescribed even bloody extermination of the country's foes, commended the murder of tyrants. On the other hand, the Gospel taught a universal religion; spoke neither of State nor country, inculcated precepts of charity, modesty and abnegation, observed by none in public life, since *according to the nature of things*, as Guicciardini said, it would have been most perilous for any one to attempt scrupulous observance of such precepts in the government of States. Hence the origin of the conflict that we have long seen waged in numerous forms, not alone in literature and science, but even in real life. We have beheld it exemplified in Girolamo Olgiati, when, stirred by study of the classics to vengeance on the oppressor of Milan, he besought the forgiveness of St. Ambrose for being about to stain his altar with blood, and implored him to vouchsafe success to the blow that was to annihilate iniquity. On being led to the scaffold, Olgiati invoked the Holy Virgin and recited Latin distiches in praise of tyrannicides. We have also seen another example in Pietro Paolo Boscoli, who declared himself ready to face death with fortitude, for love of liberty, under the inspiration of the Greek and Roman philosophers, but was unable to die for the cause as a good Christian. Upon the ruins of the Middle Ages a conception of State and country was being built up of fragments of resuscitated antiquity, and this seemed to erect itself in opposition to the idea of Christian morality.

Guicciardini perceived this conflict of his age, and noted it as a fact, without attempting to explain it; saying, indeed, that it was best spoken of under the breath and to few hearers. He fully understood that by this plan his counsels and political maxims,

notwithstanding their truth, sagaciousness, and practicality, became nothing more than simple observations, palliatives, and tricks for the wiser or less wise guidance of the social machine, apart from all radical reform, or the creation of any new system of political science or moral philosophy, and still less of any new State or new people. But he neither hoped nor desired to entertain aims of so lofty a nature. System he did not seek, daring hypotheses were not to his taste; he merely gathered the fruit of his own and others' daily experience, noting down his ideas as they occurred to him, without trying to shape them into an organic unity, under any principle or maxim of a more general order. Of course this method had its weak side; but, on the other hand, it afforded him the immense advantage of being able to lay his observations before others in their genuine and practical form, with the same spontaneity with which they had presented themselves to his mind, and without any modification for the sake of giving them a systematic arrangement. Therefore, it is precisely in his "Ricordi politici e civili," that the qualities of his intellect are displayed with the most enviable and unequalled lucidity. It would be hard to find anywhere in modern literature another series of maxims and sentences revealing, as this reveals, the whole political and moral structure, not of one individual alone, but of an entire century.

It is continually repeated in the "Ricordi" that it is a great error "to wish to speak of the affairs of the world in general terms and according to fixed rules; since nearly all admit of exceptions, such as may only be noted down in the *book of discretion*.¹ Theory is very different from practice, and many who can comprehend the former are unable to carry it out.² Neither is it useful to speak by examples, inasmuch as every small modification in each special case leads to considerable variation of results.³ Therefore those are greatly in error (and here it is evident that he alludes to Machiavelli) who always cite the example of the Romans. It would be necessary to have a city in the same conditions as theirs, in order to be able to govern on their plan."⁴ But elsewhere he asserts, without noticing that he is copying one of the general maxims of Machiavelli whom he had contradicted: "That past things shed light on future things; for

¹ Guicciardini, "Opere Inedite," vol. i. "Ricordo" vi. cclvii. and cccxliii.

² Ibid., vol. i. "Ricordo" xxxv.

³ Ibid., "Ricordo" cxvii.

⁴ Ibid., "Ricordo" cx.

the world was always of the same sort, and all that which is and will be, has been in former times ; and the same things return, but under different names and colours ; therefore not all men can recognize them, only he who has wisdom observes and considers them diligently."¹ He again copies from Machiavelli in those other "Ricordi" where he speaks of the power of chance, and observes how important it is for every man to fall upon times to which his special abilities are suited, and in which they are understood and appreciated. Could men change their natures according to the times, which is very difficult, if not impossible, they would be far less dominated by chance.² But whereas Machiavelli dwells on these observations, bases a general law on them, and constructs general maxims serving as the foundation of a new science, Guicciardini merely notes them and proceeds to other subjects.

Even in his "Ricordi," the latter repeats "that States cannot be maintained according to conscience, because, excepting in the case of Republics in their own country (or in their capital cities), all governments are violent ; not excluding that of the Emperor, and still less of the priesthood, whose violence is twofold, being carried out by the spiritual as well as the temporal arm."³ Also the subjects of a Republic, that is to say, all who are not citizens of the dominant city, are in worse case than those of a prince, "since the Republic grants no share of its grandeur to any but the citizens of its chief city, while oppressing all the others ; the prince treats all in the same manner, and considers all equally his subjects ; therefore, every subject may hope for bounty and employment at his hands."⁴ Now this is a general, true, and profound remark, displaying the weak side of the mediæval Republics, and the cause of their inevitable decay, and showing why they never succeeded in founding a modern State, without passing through the phase of despotism. But the author does not even seem conscious of the full value of what he has observed, and passes on. He displays his scantiness, or rather lack of sympathy for the people : "To speak of the people is to speak of madmen, for the people is a monster full of confusion and error,

¹ Guicciardini, "Ricordo" cccxxvi.

² Ibid., "Ricordo" xxxi. See, too, the preceding one.

³ Ibid., "Opere Inedite," vol. i. "Ricordo" xlviii. The whole of the

"Ricordo" is repeated in the treatise "Del Reggimento di Firenze," p. 211.

⁴ Ibid., "Ricordo" cvii.

and its vain beliefs are as far from truth as is Spain from India according to Ptolemy." ¹ Still, this by no means prevents him from speaking ill of the despotism of which he was on several occasions a supporter: "The cement walling in the States of tyrants, is the blood of citizens; therefore every man should labour to prevent his own city from having palace walls of that kind." ²

Yet we must not take this as an instance of self-contradiction. Guicciardini aims at nothing more than the description of the world, with the thousand changing aspects in which he beheld it; his studies chiefly tend to inquiry into the mutable nature of man, and to the discovery of the art of keeping him in subjection. But what in short is the human being that he studies so earnestly, both as he really is, or as, according to Guicciardini, he ought to be? He would have him virtuous, because virtue is beautiful, confers renown, and all are by nature disposed to it, unless (of course) personal interest should come into play, to which all men necessarily succumb. "Sincerity pleases and wins praise, dissimulation is censured and hated; the former, however, is more useful to others than to oneself, and therefore I should praise him whose usual mode of life was open and sincere, and who only used dissimulation in certain things of great importance; and it then succeeds all the better, the more one has contrived to establish a reputation for honesty." ³ He recommends the sentiment of pride and honour, to which he professes to have always been keenly alive, declaring actions to be deadly without that stimulus. ⁴ With the same calmness, however, he remarks, that it is sometimes advisable to take revenge, even without feeling any rancour; "because the example is a lesson to others not to offend you; and it is very well that you should revenge yourself and yet bear no rancour of mind towards him on whom you wreak your revenge." ⁵ And he likewise advises that we should persistently deny that which we do not wish to be known, and affirm that which we would have believed, because, notwithstanding every proof to the contrary, we are nearly always successful in the end. ⁶ His virtue, therefore, is a mere virtue of expediency, serving only for the better concealment of profound egotism. Neither does Guicciardini

¹ Guicciardini, "Opere Inedite," vol. i. "Ricordo" cccxlv.

² Ibid., "Ricordo" ccxlii.

³ Ibid., "Ricordi" civ. and cclxvii.

⁴ Ibid., "Opere Inedite," vol. i. "Ricordi" cxviii. and cccxxvii.

⁵ Ibid., "Ricordo" lxxiv.

⁶ Ibid., "Ricordo" xxxvii.

use any arts to deceive his readers ; indeed, no one could speak more plainly in his writings. He exhibits himself to us without any disguise : " No one can have a stronger detestation than mine for the avarice, ambition, and sloth of the priesthood. . . . Nevertheless, the position I have always held with several pontiffs, has compelled me to love their greatness for my own advantage ; and but for this consideration I should have loved Martin Luther as myself, not for the purpose of freeing myself from the laws introduced by the Christian religion, as it is generally interpreted and understood, but in order to see this herd of wretches reduced to their proper condition, namely that of being left either without vices, or without authority."¹ And this idea, and others of the the same kind, are continually repeated by him with the same frankness.²

What, then, could be done with this man, justly styled by De Sanctis, the man of Guicciardini, and who was likewise the man of the Italian Renaissance, that made his own entity (*particolare*)³ the centre of the universe ? Given such a man, what society, what State could be formed ? Nothing but a society in which individual interests would be balanced by reciprocal limitations, and various ambitions gratified in the best way and with just moderation. Hence the endeavour to devise machinery and regulations of increasing complexity, which in the end had always to be maintained by fraud or force. No conception of lofty social aims, nor of a living organism of the State was possible under these circumstances ; and neither was there any possibility of genuine public integrity. Worse still, all this reacted even upon private life, its effects had already long been visible on the Italian conscience, on Italian manners and Italian literature, and it was to be feared that all would go from bad to worse. In order to reconstruct the political and moral world on a more solid basis, it was

¹ Guicciardini, " Opere Inedite," vol. i. " Ricordo," xxviii.

² Ibid., " Ricordo " cccxli. See, too, " Ricordo " ccxxxvi.

³ " Nuovi Saggi Critici " of Francesco De Sanctis. Naples, Morano, 1872, pp. 203-228. See also " Une autobiographie de Guichardin d'après ses œuvres inédites," by Professor A. Geffroy in the " Revue des Deux Mondes," 1st February, 1874. Mons. E. Benoist's work, " Guichardin historien et homme d'Etat Italien au XVI^eme. Siècle " (Paris, 1862), appeared before the publication of the greater part of the " Opere Inedite," and has therefore no great value. Recently Signor Carlo Gioda has published a large volume entitled " Guicciardini e le sue opere inedite," Bologna, Zanichelli, 1880. In this the author gives a summary of the " Opere Inedite," accompanied by a very minute commentary.

first of all necessary to be able to improve men's minds, giving them a different nature and a different character, "even as those who knead edibles to a paste, thus giving them any shape that is desired." But for this was needed "the blade of Lycurgus to extirpate our sloth, our greed, and our vainglory." Now this blade of Lycurgus, that was to permanently redeem the country, was, in Guicciardini's judgment, nothing but an unrealizable dream in those days ; while on the other hand it was the continual and constant hope of Machiavelli, the hope to which, as we shall see, he dedicated his most earnest thought, and most zealous study.





CHAPTER II.

The "Prince" and the "Discourses"—Religious reform and the new State—Machiavelli's paganism—His republican faith—Machiavelli and Aristotle—The State according to Machiavelli's ideas—His method—Political science in Greece, and during the Renaissance—The Discourses.



DURING the year 1513, in order to avoid suspicion and annoyance, Machiavelli very seldom quitted his villa to come down to the city. Weary of the solitude and forced idleness to which he was condemned, weary of waiting for employment that never came, he soon devoted himself to study with the utmost ardour. For it was in this year that he undertook the two works upon which his renown as a political writer chiefly rests; namely, the "Principe" and the "Discorsi." Indeed, the former was completed by the month of December, at which time he was engaged in giving it the final touches.¹ He worked for some time

¹ See Letter xxvi. in the "Opere," vol. viii. p. 93 and fol. In this, after relating to his friend Vettori how he had composed his work, Machiavelli goes on to say: "Filippo Casavecchia has seen it; can tell you all about the thing itself, and the conversations I have had with him on it, although I am still employed in fattening and repolishing it" (p. 96). This celebrated letter was found in the codex lviii. 47, of the Barberini Library in Rome, and bears date 10th of October, 1513, as was noted in page xxxvii of the preface to the "Opere," whose editors were the first to publish it. This date we have personally verified, but the editors of the "Opere," afterwards, and without giving any reason for the change, printed the letter with the date of the 10th of December. We believe the reason of this to be that Francesco Vettori only acknowledged the receipt of this letter in his own of the 24th of December, while in a previous letter, dated 23rd of November, he states that the last letter received by him from Machiavelli was that of the 26th of August, containing the fable of the lion and the fox. *Vide* Italian edition, Appendix (II.) document xvii.

longer on the "Discorsi," and after all left them unfinished ; since, although designed as a commentary on the history of Titus Livy, they were not pursued beyond the first Decade. Yet even in their unfinished state they form a treatise on politics divided into three books. It may be asserted that if joined to the "Principe," they would form together a single and more complete work ; the one treating of principalities, the other of Republics. The determination of certain critics to consider them as two distinct and unconnected works, written not only with different, but even with opposed intentions, has caused the strangest errors in judging them. But attentive perusal quickly leads to a different verdict. Not only does the one work frequently refer to the other,¹ but were the "Prince" lost, and

¹ The second chapter of the "Prince" begins thus : "I will now cease from speaking of Republics, because elsewhere I spoke of them at length. I shall turn only to the *principato*," &c. ("Opere," vol. iv. p. 2). The Discourses contain frequent quotations from the "Prince." In chapter i. of book ii. we find : "On this head it would be well to show the method observed by the Roman people in invading the territories of others, if we have not already spoken of it at length in our treatise on principalities, wherein this matter is diffusely discussed" ("Opere," vol. iii. p. 183). In chapter xix. of book iii., after saying that the Prince should rather abstain from taking other men's goods than from taking their blood, he adds, "as has been largely treated in another treatise upon this matter" (Ibid., p. 377). In chapter xlii. of book iii., after having said that princes do not keep their promises when the reasons leading to those promises no longer exist, he continues : "Whether this thing be laudable or not, or whether similar fashions should or should not be observed by a prince, has been extensively demonstrated by us in our treatise on the Prince, wherefore at present we will say nothing upon it" (p. 437).

From this it is evident that when Machiavelli was composing the "Prince," he had already spoken of Republics at length in the "Discourses." In fact, we find these quoted in the second page of the "Prince," whereas he first quotes the "Prince" at page 183 of the "Discourses"; that is, at the commencement of the second book. Signor Carlo Gioda, in his work, "Machiavelli e le sue Opere" (Florence, Barbéra, 1874), says, in mentioning the quotation from the "Discourses" to be found in the "Prince": "This sentence, according to Artaud, was changed at the time that the Medici gave permission for the book to be printed; yet it is not to be found in the copy of 1513, in the which year Machiavelli had not yet composed the 'Discorsi sopra la prima Deca di Tito Livio'; and he must have added it some years later, namely after having *fattened and repolished them*" (p. 292). But where is this copy, dated 1513, from which the sentence is missing? This is not stated either by Artaud or by Gioda, and it is not known. (See Artaud, "Machiavelli, son génie," &c., vol. i. p. 285, note 1.) Besides Artaud, to whom Gioda refers, is a writer of little weight and little exactitude. Two apocryphal copies of the "Principe" that to ourselves and many others appear to be in Buonaccorsi's handwriting, are in existence; one in the Laurentian Library (cod. 32, shelf xlv.), the other in the Riccardi Library (cod. 2603). Both of these contain

nothing known of it save its subject, scope, and limits, it would be easy to reconstruct it almost entirely by giving greater development to some of the maxims only touched upon in the "Discourses," but thoroughly unfolded in the former work.

Although the "Prince" was completed some time sooner, we will first speak of the "Discourses,"¹ since in these its germ is already to be found, and may even be said to be in relation with the whole system of the author. Also, it is now time to say something of this system, or rather of its fundamental conceptions and general tendency. From the first pages of the "Discourses" it is very easy to see that Machiavelli was treading a road entirely different from that followed by Guicciardini, Giannotti, and other writers. He did not ask himself, What is the form of government best adapted to Florence? What should be the attributes of the Gonfalonier, the Signory, and the Ten, and in what manner should they be elected? What should be the composition of the Senate and the Great Council; how should these institutions be balanced so as to gratify all the restless ambitions of the Florentines? On the contrary, that which Machiavelli sought to investigate was from what causes nations rose and prospered or became corrupt and fell into decay, how they ought to be governed, and above all in what way a strong and durable State might be established. Even the language he used, clearly indicates the great distance separating him from Guicciardini. In Machiavelli's writings we continually meet with the words: "*and this must be held as a general rule*;" whereas Guicciardini, as we have seen, is equally insistent in repeating that in human affairs no general rules hold good; that it is all very well to inscribe general rules in books, but that in practice "*long experience and worthy discretion*" are alone of any use. Machiavelli aimed at the creation of a new science, and had the faith required for attempting the difficult

the sentence quoted. The first gives it in this shape: "I will leave aside speaking of Republics, since on another occasion I spoke of them at length." Another and synchronous copy in the Barberini Library at Rome, cod. lvi. 7, also contains the same quotation.

¹ In chapter x. of book ii. of the "Discorsi" (p. 213) Machiavelli speaks of the war between the Florentines and the Duke of Urbino in 1517, and remarks that, "*a few days ago* the Pope and Florentines together would have had no difficulty in defeating Francesco Maria, nephew of Pope Julius II., in the war of Urbino." In chapter xxiv. of the same book, p. 271, mention is made of Ottaviano Fregoso, who destroyed the fortress of Genoa, and who afterwards repulsed the attacks of the enemy. Now, as this event took place in 1521, it is plain that the author passed a much longer time in writing the "Discorsi."

enterprise suggested to him and almost rendered indispensable by the actual condition of the human mind and society. The aim of Guicciardini was to take advantage of circumstances, and make his own way in the world.

The man of the Italian Renaissance, dominated as he was by downright egotism, without the moral guidance of any general interest, always entirely occupied amid the dissolution of all mediæval institutions with his own individuality, *il suo particolare*, would have thrown all things back into anarchy and ruin, had not his intellect, width of culture, and love of art and science saved him for a time, and with him society. But this state of things could not last long, unless some issue could be found. In fact it was thus that two great events of the world's history took place; namely, the Reformation of religion on the one hand; on the other the constitution of States and nationalities. These two events had no apparent connection with each other; but both in truth started from the idea that the individual man was naturally bad and powerless for good;¹ both were stimulated by the need of reconstituting the moral world, now threatened with ruin; and both sought success by means of recalling to life more general interests and more ideal aims. The Reformation initiated by Martin Luther in Germany, and exercising a salutary influence even upon Catholicism, by compelling it to amendment, regarded man as absolutely bad, and therefore, without superhuman assistance, capable only of evil. Man could only save his soul by faith infused into him by divine grace, but through no merit of his good works, which were instead the necessary consequences of faith and grace.

The other great event, that had begun earlier, and that occupied Machiavelli, who never concerned himself with religious questions, was the formation of the modern State, which brought about the reconstitution of social unity, by ensuring the victory of public good over private egotism. It seemed at that time as if by reason of human wickedness, this conception of social unity could never be effected, save by force. It was not thought possible to evolve it from the old institutions it destroyed; nor from the in-

¹ Even Herr Karl Knies, in his paper, "Der Patriotismus Machiavelli's" (*Preussische Jahrbücher*, of June, 1871), after observing, that if Machiavelli thought ill of mankind, Martin Luther and the Reform began by having no faith in human goodness, concludes by saying, that we thus find the same conception of man, in politics as well as in religion.

dividual conscience tainted by selfishness ; not even from the national conscience then existing only in embryo and that was to find its development in the new State. It seemed, therefore, to be the personal work of the sovereign or tyrant who, while solely aiming at the triumph of his personal interests, could only reach success by ensuring at least the partial triumph of the public welfare. This revolution, first begun in Italy, was completed in France by Louis XI. and his successors ; was accomplished in Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella ; and elsewhere by other potentates, who, while all unscrupulously trampling upon local and individual rights, founded, together with their own power, the power of the nations on which they bestowed unity and strength.

Now, although the novel conception of a national State was really born of causes, not wholly unrelated to those which had promoted the Reformation, and the effects of that conception were not contradictory to the Reformation, inasmuch as the former dislocated the universal unity of the Empire, and the latter the universal unity of the Church ; yet the new political idea seemed to arise in opposition to the religious thought of the age. It had in fact appeared in the literature of the learned men in many different shapes ; but, from the days of Petrarch, it had taken the form of a revival of a Pagan idea—the idea of ancient Rome restored to life and vigour in all the solemn majesty of her Republic or her Empire, and as a perpetual incitement to glory, political freedom, and above all to patriotism. Hence it came about that although the Reformation was re-awakening the spirit of Christianity in the world, it was barely mentioned by our politicians of the Renaissance. For these men seemed to be thoroughly imbued with the Pagan spirit, and merely regarded Christianity as a guide to private morality, an aid to individual salvation in the future life, but as having no concern in this life with the welfare of their country, which they rightly judged superior to every private interest.

And if the contemporaries of Machiavelli were Pagans in political matters, Machiavelli himself was a still greater Pagan, as is abundantly proved by every page of his works. It is proved by his boundless admiration for antiquity ; his indifference to religion ; his hatred towards the Papacy ; by the way in which he spoke of Christianity, especially when comparing it with Paganism ; and, finally, by the peculiar language he frequently employed and that demonstrated his mode of thought with singular lucidity.

For example: he always used the word *virtue* in the sense of courage and energy both for good and evil. To Christian virtue in its more general meaning, he rather applied the term, goodness, and felt much less admiration for it than for the Pagan virtue that was always fruitful of glory. And in his opinion men valued glory beyond all else in the world, since that alone rendered them immortal and like unto the gods. Men, he said, preferred infamy to oblivion, for at least infamy served to transmit their names to posterity. He greatly admired, and often repeated with enthusiasm, the encomium of Gino Capponi upon "those who loved their country better than the safety of their souls," a phrase that was highly popular at the period. This mode of feeling and expression, started by the learned men of the fifteenth century, among whom Machiavelli had been trained, became considerably softened in the sixteenth century, and we find it already somewhat modified in Guicciardini, who was always temperate and prudent. But in Machiavelli it survived in all its primitive vigour, still farther emphasized by its strange contrast with other ideas of his, which were much in advance of the fifteenth century and with his far more modern style of Italian composition. In fact, sentiments of that kind appeared much more tolerable in the Latin tongue employed by the learned men, who thus seemed in their writings to be held at a greater distance from the actual world in which they lived, whereas Machiavelli dedicated his whole thought to it, worked and wrote for that world alone.

Neither must we forget, if we would fully understand the more general tendencies and character of Machiavelli's mind, that, after holding for fifteen years the office of Secretary to the Florentine Republic, and serving it with the utmost zeal and fidelity, he always preserved his republican sentiments. In the very letters that he wrote to Vettori, to seek employment from the Pope or from the Medici in Florence, we have noted that even when obliged to make casual allusion to the Swiss, he neither could nor would restrain his enthusiasm for the warrior nation that enjoyed complete liberty together with purity and modesty of manners. Therefore his first and supreme ideal was Republican Rome, than which his imagination could conceive nothing grander nor more glorious. In what fashion all these different ideas, tendencies and sentiments were co-ordinated in his works, and to what degree they became fused into a single code of doctrines, are the points that must next engage our attention.

First, however, another serious preliminary question has to be examined. Some writers, and among them more than one of considerable weight, persisted in discovering in Machiavelli—and more especially in his “Prince”—an imitation of the “Politics” of Aristotle. All attempts, however, to prove the truth of this assertion only resulted in proving its baselessness, since all was reduced to laying stress on a few phrases of no scientific import, which Machiavelli may either have taken from Aristotle or from others. Certain expressions in his private letters lead us even to infer that at the time when he had nearly completed the “Prince,” and written part of the “Discourses,” he had never yet read the “Politics” of Aristotle.¹ Nor should this surprise us, since it is well known that his culture was principally based upon Latin writers. But apart from questions such as these, and considering substantial points only, it is easy to perceive that the conception of the “State,” occupying so important a place in Machiavelli’s works, was evidently inspired by Roman history, and neither by Grecian history nor by Aristotle. For the Greeks, the State embraced all society, all individual activity; and the “Politics” of Aristotle—certainly one of the greatest monuments of human wisdom, and so lofty a one, that we must leap from it to Machiavelli to gain another step in advance—treats not only of governments, but of instruction, education, music, gymnastics, poetry, religion, the art of war, political economy, and every branch of human activity. According to Aristotle, the individual existed for the government; but the government must in all things improve the individual, and therefore compass him about on every side.²

¹ This was remarked by Herr Leo, in reference to the letter dated 26th of August, 1513, already quoted by us, in which Machiavelli replied to Vettori who had quoted Aristotle to him: “Neither do I know what Aristotle may have said of divided Republics; but I can form a good idea of what it might reasonably be, of what it is, and of what it has been” (“Opere,” vol. viii. p. 90). Notwithstanding the remarks of Ranke on the “Principe,” Leo also allows that the comparison between Aristotle and Machiavelli “muss mit Bestimmtheit zurückgewiesen werden.” See “Die Briefe des florentinischen Kanzlers und Geschichtschreibers Niccolò Machiavelli und seine Freunde, aus dem Italienischen übersetzt,” von D. H. Leo. Berlin, Dummler, 1826. Preface, page xx.

² It is enough to open the “Politics” of Aristotle to arrive at this conclusion. See the important work on this subject: “Die Staatslehre des Aristoteles in historisch-politischen Umrissen,” von Prof. Wilhelm Onken, zwei Hälften. Leipzig, Engelmann, 1870 and 1875. Also a pamphlet by the same author entitled: “Aristoteles und seine Lehre vom Staat,” Berlin, 1870.

On the other hand, the Romans, who echoed Grecian ideas in science, by defining the conception of justice, and distinguishing it from morality, still further strengthened the power of the State with respect to the individual ; but at the same time they circumscribed its boundaries. Its force was augmented by becoming more strictly juridical and political.¹ Now, whoever passes from Aristotle to Machiavelli is at once driven to recognize an enormous and substantial diversity in the fact that, for the latter, the political idea alone seems to have existence. Like the ancients, he sacrifices the individual to the State ; but in his opinion the State is indifferent to every activity save the political and military, and is solely engaged in guarding the security of its own existence and increasing its own strength. Even in his *Histories*, Machiavelli's men appear incapable of any ambition or passion save the political ; there is hardly any mention of letters, art, culture, or religion. Now all this is opposed to the vaster, more various, and more philosophic ideas of the culture of the Greeks. Yet notwithstanding its greater breadth, Grecian culture never succeeded in establishing the limits of law and government. Hence the heroes of Machiavelli must be sought on the Capitol, for his ideal country was always Rome.

Again, there is another aspect under which it has been attempted to collate him with Aristotle : both, it has been said, pursued the same method. And in the matter of method the genius of Aristotle was truly gigantic.² He was undoubtedly the real founder of the inductive method in natural science, and of

¹ These ideas, which may be called elementary, are expounded in the best known treatises. See "*Théorie générale de l'État*," par M. Bluntschli, translated by M. A. de Riedmatten, Paris, Guillemin, 1877. Book. i. chap. iii., "*Histoire du développement de l'idée de l'État*." The same author has also given a more detailed explanation of the difference, between the State of the Middle Ages, and the State of modern times, in his discourse : "*Ueber den Unterschied der mittelalterlichen und der modernen Staatsidee. Ein wissenschaftlicher Vortrag gehalten zu München am 5 Februar, 1855.*" München, 1855. See also, Theodore D. Woolsey, "*Political Science or the State theoretically and practically considered.*" London, Sampson Low. Part ii. chap. i., "*Opinions on the Nature and Origin of the State.*"

² Robert von Mohl, in his excellent study, "*Die Machiavelli Literatur*," forming part of his great work, "*Die Geschichte und Literatur der Staatswissenschaften*" (Erlangen, Enke, 1855-58, in 3 vols.), after other remarks upon Machiavelli, goes on to say : "*Zweitens über ist seine Methode eine treffliche. Seit Aristoteles war er wieder der erste, welcher die inneren allgemeinen Gründe der von der Geschichte erzählten, oder von ihm selbst erlebten und beobachteten Thatsachen aufzusuchen sich bemühte und aus den einzelnen Erscheinungen auf die Ursache*

the historic method in political science. According to him, natural phenomena were for the former that which were historical facts for the second. This discovery undoubtedly constituted one of the greatest events in the history of human thought, and forms one of the chief glories, not only of Aristotle, but of the enduring genius of the Greeks. But it is pure exaggeration to assert that all which appeared to be the special work of the Italian Renaissance had really been accomplished many centuries earlier by the Greeks.¹ Observation of nature and the inductive method were indeed originated by Aristotle; but this method revived and received a more general application during the Renaissance, and was transformed, or rather completed in Italy by Leonardo da Vinci and Galileo. The genuine experimental method, productive of the magnificent progress of natural science, is of modern growth, and is not restricted to the observation of nature, to the induction and deduction, forming its starting-point and basis, which were really known to the ancients. The new and genuine character of the experimental method consists in this, that the results of observation and induction are finally confirmed by verification with Nature. For Nature cannot withhold her verdict, and, as Aristotle himself said, can never speak falsely. And not only this: a phenomenon that has been studied and explained is very often reproduced by artificial means; and this was likewise unknown to the ancients.

Nothing of all this was possible in political science, which had, therefore, recourse to the historic method. But here, too, we find an immense difference between Aristotle and Machiavelli, who under this aspect was a true representative of the Renaissance. The problem proposed by Aristotle in his "Politics" was mainly an inquiry into the best form of government. He made an admirable analysis of all the governments of Greece, in order to glean from them the scattered constituents of the ideal he desired to reconstruct. A Republic or monarchy having real existence had no greater value for him than those living only in a philosopher's brain; and in fact he applied the same kind of criticism to the Republic of Plato as to the Republic of Sparta.²

schloss. Diese ist allerdings noch nicht vollendete und am wenigsten systematische Wissenschaft, allein es ist die einzig richtige Grundlage für eine Erfahrungslehre, wie diese die Staatskunst ist oder wenigstens sein soll" (vol. iii. p. 539).

¹ On this head we do not altogether agree with Professor Oncken.

² This has been well pointed out by Professor Oncken, who exactly on that account ought, we think, to have more explicitly recognized the stride made by political science during the Renaissance.

The sole difference he recognized lay in their greater distance from, or nearer approach to his ideal. It was already a great step in advance to make use of history for the definition of this ideal ; but Machiavelli had another object in view, and thus the governments imagined by philosophers were not of the slightest importance to him. Aristotle chiefly sought to establish that which men and governments should be ; Machiavelli declared such inquiry to be useless, and rather tried to determine that which they were and that which they might actually be. For him, ancient and contemporary history were more than simple aids, they were the sole basis, almost indeed the essential substance of his science, which investigated the actual conditions of mankind and society, and aimed at the knowledge, not of that which should be done, but of that which was or might be done.

There is one point, however, on which a comparison with Aristotle can be drawn without much deviation from truth. Originally the Grecian State was identical with religion, and hence its existence was sacred and divine. Aristotle was the first to study it rather as a natural fact, by declaring that man was essentially a political being. In this he was entirely at one with Machiavelli, and his work may be said to be analogous to that of the Italian Renaissance, which in its turn, by discarding the shackles of theology, once more began to view history and society as purely human and natural facts. This revolution, however, had to combat difficulties unknown to the ancient world, in which the State had not found itself opposed by the mighty fabric of the universal Church ; it had therefore to arrive at different conclusions, and being unable to reduce religion to a simple engine of government, as was the habit of Pagan antiquity, it was obliged instead to acknowledge its independence. Even leaving aside this, by no means unimportant difference, it is certain that the emancipation of human thought completed by the Italian Renaissance, although very similar to that promoted by the Greek philosophy, was achieved in Italy by the wholesale resuscitation of antiquity, and not by simple imitation of Aristotle. On the contrary, it had to start by combating his philosophy, which, misinterpreted during the Middle Ages, had been changed and distorted into a pliable weapon of theology. The *genuine* Aristotle, as it was called, came later, and the "Politics," brought from Constantinople to Italy by Francesco Filelfo in 1429, only began to be familiarly known towards the close of the century, by the printed edition issued in 1492

of the first intelligible and correct translation, already completed by Leonardo Bruni, of Arezzo. At that time the "Politics" found Italians prepared to appreciate its immense value, since they had for some time lived amid the same conditions coinciding with its production in Greece.

We now come to the "Discourses." These are divided into three books, of which the first treats of the methods by which States are founded and of their internal organization ; the second of the methods of aggrandizing them and of conquests ; while the third is devoted to the exposition of general reflections on the growth and decay of States, on the manner of effecting their transformation, on conspiracies, &c. The distribution of subjects in the different books is not always precise ; on the contrary, it frequently occurs that one book treats of subjects proper to another. We will therefore examine the work as a whole, taking in logical sequence the arguments therein treated. For the present we will leave aside everything said—especially in the second book—regarding the art of war ; that subject having been discussed by the author at greater length in a special treatise, of which we shall speak in due time.

The "Discourses" are dedicated to Zanobi Buondelmonti and Cosimo Rucellai, intimate friends of Machiavelli, and from whom, as we shall see, he received certain benefits. "I send you," he says, "the worthiest gift I have to offer, inasmuch as it comprises all that I have learnt from long experience and continuous study of the things of the world."¹ In the proem following this letter he adds that he well knows that he is exposing himself to much criticism, on account of the great novelty of his undertaking ; nevertheless, stimulated by the desire he has always felt to render himself useful to others, he unhesitatingly enters "on a path as yet untrodden by other men."² What, then, is this path ? "In all things we seek to imitate the ancients. Our juris-consults learn how to give advice by study of ancient laws, for in that consists jurisprudence ; and medicine likewise is founded upon the experience of the ancients continued and enlarged by modern physicians. Yet in the ordering and maintaining of Republics, kingdoms and armies ; in the art of aggrandizing empires and governing subjects, no one has recourse to the examples of antiquity. This comes of the lack of true knowledge of history, which all read for the simple pleasure of learning the various incidents it records ; and instead of

¹ "Opere," vol. iii. p. 1.

² Ibid., vol. iii. p. 5.

seeking to copy these, they believe all imitation impossible, just as though the sky, the sun, the elements and mankind were not always the same. Therefore these "Discourses" are written chiefly to show "the use that may be derived from history in politics."¹ Accordingly, it is clear from the very beginning that the object of the work is a new science of statesmanship based on the experience of human events and history.

Machiavelli quickly plunges into his subject, with the aid of Titus Livy, and after speaking of the various modes of founding cities, treats of the origins of governments and their various forms. "At first, men lived like brutes; then they thought of choosing a chief for their better protection, and elected the strongest man among them. Thus the first communities arose; the sentiments of justice and honesty came into being; the first laws were made, and punishments were inflicted upon transgressors. Afterwards they no longer chose the strongest, but the wisest and most prudent man to hold rule; this man then transmitted his power to his heirs, and thus arose monarchy, which was the primary form of government. But owing to the innate tendency of mankind to abuse all things, the monarch once assured of his power, he was sooner or later transformed into a tyrant. Thereupon, either in their own defence, or that of the people, whose leaders they became, the *ottimati*, or patricians, came to the front, and thus arose the aristocratic government, which, in its turn running to excess as soon as it was firmly established, was converted into the oligarchy. Finally the people rose, and founded the democratic government; and this also, and for the same reasons, proceeding to excess, sank into demagoguery. This in its turn made princely power a necessity, and human society again trod the same road from the beginning, with infinite twists and deviations, unless, as frequently happened, it was checked half-way by falling a prey to neighbouring States. To avoid the dangers caused by these continual changes and revolutions, prudent men invented the mixed form of government—composed of all the three other forms—judging it to be safer and more stable, because sovereign, patricians and popular government being united in the same city, all kept one another in check. This it is that was accomplished with excellent results by Lycurgus at Sparta. Romulus, on the other hand, founded a monarchy; but that which in Rome was left undone by the legislator, was brought about by good fortune and the natural force of events.

¹ "Opere," vol. iii. pp. 6, 7.

The insolence of kings gave rise to government by consuls and patricians, the insolence of the latter roused the people, who, without overthrowing either consuls or patricians, gained its share of rule. And thus a mixed government was naturally formed, in which the monarchical element was represented by consuls, while the aristocratic and popular elements also shared in it at the same time."¹

This theory of the sequence of governments and their alternation reminds us of that afterwards expounded by Vico, and might lead to many considerations, if one alone did not prevail over all others.² The fragment we have epitomized above, is no more, with the exception of some novel observations on the history of Rome, than an imitation, and even more frequently the translation of a well-known portion of the sixth book of the "Histories" of Polybius. We have elsewhere noted our reasons for believing that Machiavelli knew this work through some Latin version; but it is beyond all doubt that in his "Discourses" he copied it outright.³

We must, therefore, regard the whole of this chapter as one of the fragments of antiquity so frequently used by him in the construction of his political system. We do not further insist upon the point, because this law of history, we might almost say this attempt towards the philosophy of history, can only claim originality as regards Machiavelli's application of it, to which we shall have occasion to recur. For we have already

¹ "Discorsi," book i. chap. ii.

² The resemblance we find between the succession of governments as it is defined in the "Scienza Nuova" of Vico and the "Discorsi" of Machiavelli, need cause us no astonishment, since both theories were derived from the history of Rome, and were both perhaps suggested by ancient writers. Besides, even by modern writers the theory is partially admitted. Sir Henry Maine, in his excellent work on "Ancient Law" (London, Murray, 1878; ch. i. pp. 10, 11), tells us that: "The proposition that a historical era of aristocracies succeeded a historical era of heroic kings may be considered as true, if not of all mankind, at all events, of all branches of the Indo-European family of nations." And shortly before, in speaking of the patricians who succeeded to kings: "Unless they were prematurely overthrown by the popular party, they all ultimately approached very closely to what we should now understand by a political aristocracy."

³ Vol. ii. note to p. 14 of this work. *Vide* Italian edition, Appendix (II.), document xviii. Professor Triantafyllis, in his pamphlet, "Niccolò Machiavelli and the Greek Writers," Venice, 1875, p. 9 and fol., gives the original passage from Polybius, the Italian translation by Dr. J. Kohen, and the fragment of Machiavelli, in order again to prove its identity with the Greek original.

seen that the idea of mixed governments had been transmitted to Italy from ancient times, and was considerably diffused there during the fifteenth century, precisely by means of Polybius.¹

Machiavelli, then, after copying this passage, continues his considerations upon Rome. "Of a certainty, if the Romans had only aimed at the ensurance of internal tranquility they would have been able to found an aristocracy by the exclusion of the people. But then, beside the above-mentioned peril of falling into anarchy, their conquests would have been impossible, since to accomplish these it was necessary to arm the people, and an armed people cannot be excluded from a share in the government. Thus they necessarily arrived at mixed government, passing through periods of civil war."² In fact, no sooner were the Tarquins dead than the nobles began to void their venom on the people, and would have gone still further had they not been checked by violent tumults and new laws, since men do nothing good except of necessity. It is therefore said that hunger and poverty render men industrious, and that laws make them good. Where, in fact, things work well of themselves, there is no need of laws, which, however, become necessary where good practices are lacking.³

At the same time the natural wickedness of men renders necessary, but difficult—and for that reason all the worthier of glory—the mission of the legislator, of him who undertakes to found a State, the which institution has been invented for the benefit of mankind. This is the work of the political genius, of the wise ordainer and giver of laws, whose object must be not his own, but the general welfare, and who therefore removes without scruple or mercy every obstacle he finds in his way. "Many will deem it a most pernicious example, that one who, like Romulus, was the founder of a civil community, should first have killed his own brother and then consented to the death of Titus Tatius Sabinus, his chosen companion." "The which opinion would be true if we did not consider the reasons urging him to those crimes." "And it should be adopted as a general

¹ On this point it is suitable to quote the work of a young writer: "Del Governo Popolare in Firenze (1494-95), secondo il Guicciardini," by Dr. Amedeo Crivellucci. Pisa, Nistri, 1877, p. 102 and fol. It contains some accurate observations regarding the manner in which the idea of mixed government was diffused among us at that time.

² "Discorsi," bk. i. ch. vi.

³ Ibid., bk. i. ch. iii.

rule, that in order to found and reconstitute a State it is necessary to be single-handed ; all must be the work and creation of one regulating mind, for without this no true unity can ever be attained, nor anything stable founded. Therefore a prudent ruler desiring to be of service, not to himself and his successors, but to his country and the general welfare, must endeavour to hold sole authority ; nor will he ever be censured by wise men for taking extraordinary measures in order to constitute a kingdom or found a Republic." It may well be that even "when his deeds accuse him, he shall be justified by their results ; and when it is a good deed, like that of Romulus, the deed itself is sufficient justification, since he who commits violence for purposes of destruction does verily deserve censure, but not he who commits violence in order to establish security." "When, however, the State is once founded it should be entrusted to the care and guardianship of many, to ensure its duration ; inasmuch as although one man only is needed for its foundation, the interests and wills of many joined together are required for its preservation. And thus did Romulus, who, in confiding the State to the care of the Senate, proved by his deeds that he had not been incited by any greed for power. If, however, he had not been alone in the beginning, it would have happened with him as with Ægidus, who, wishing to rule the Spartans once more in accordance with the laws of Lycurgus, was killed by the Ephors. Greater acumen had Cleomenes, who, comprehending the necessity of standing alone and taking advantage of the first opportunity, had all the Ephors put to death, after which he was able to re-establish all the laws of Lycurgus, and would have succeeded in maintaining them, but for the power of the Macedonians and the weakness of the other Republics of Greece."¹

We cannot pause just now to weigh the intrinsic value of these doctrines, but there are several points demanding consideration. First of all, let the reader remark how mistaken is the opinion of those who maintain that the exposition and defence of certain maxims opposed to all humanity and to every principle of Christian morality are only to be found in the "Prince." On the contrary, it is very plain, even from the opening chapters of the "Discourses," that Machiavelli not only justifies, but commends Romulus for having murdered his brother and permitted the murder of his chosen partner ; and that he

¹ "Discorsi," bk. i. ch. ix.

likewise praises Cleomenes for having seized the first opportunity of compassing the death of the Ephors. Indeed, he would have blamed both the one and the other had they failed to commit these acts. In the "Discourses," too, he loudly and unmistakably upholds the other doctrine, so often combated as peculiar to the "Prince," namely, that of the end justifying the means. Wise men, he says, will forgive Romulus his worst actions on account of the end he had in view and the result he achieved.

And once for all we must also observe that Machiavelli accepted Roman history as he found it in Livy, without any criticism of his own, and without any fresh examination of the facts therein related. Indeed, he accepted indiscriminatingly both actual historical facts and fabulous traditions regarding the origin of Rome. On party struggles and on the causes of certain political reforms he frequently makes profoundly original remarks. But it is no less true that he often founds his theories upon incidents which never occurred, or only took place in some very different fashion, and this remark may be applied both to Roman and Grecian history.¹ Nevertheless, this does not really impair the special value of his theories, because these in general, and particularly those of the greatest importance, are seldom based on a single fact; and, indeed, being explained and repeated over and over again, they are verified by numerous groups of different facts drawn both from ancient and modern history. Occasionally even we find Machiavelli quoting the fables of mythology—as, for instance, that of the training of Achilles by Chiron the centaur—in support of an assertion; for by fables, he says, we are taught that which their inventors really wished to signify. And certainly if there be truth in fables, there is no less truth in primitive traditions.

¹ Although all that we have asserted upon this head needs no corroboration, being thoroughly self-evident, yet we may quote the words of a very trustworthy historian. Herr Schwegler ("Römische Geschichte," vol. i. ch. ii. § 29) tells us, in speaking of the "Discourses," "Die Schrift ist reich an den feinsten und treffendsten Wahrnehmungen im Gebiete der politischen Psychologie . . . ; über d'e allgemeinen psychologischen Gesetze des Staats und Völkerlebens werden darin höchst kluge und geistreiche Urtheile vorgetragen. Was dagegen dem Verfasser fehlt ist ein richtiger Begriff, eine objectiv-historische Anschauung des römischen Alterthums besitzt er nichts, daher sind seine Urtheile, z. B. diejenigen über Julius Cæsar gar oft unhistorisch und durch conventionelles Vorurtheil dictirt." Naturally this defect is visibly diminished wherever Titus Livy is an authentic source of history; but is much increased wherever it is a question of vague traditions.

However that may be, the theory first founded by him upon the life of Romulus, regarding whom we have so little authentic knowledge, seemed to Machiavelli of the widest general importance. He therefore frequently recurred to it in his pages, and sought to corroborate it both by the weight of ancient tradition and of historical facts of the utmost diversity. Not only, too, should the founders of kingdoms and republics stand alone, but, for the same reasons, the founders of religious creeds, equally intended to curb the evil passions of mankind and enforce righteous laws, should likewise act singly. "The Roman people was greatly favoured by fortune in obtaining after a law-giving, warrior king like Romulus, a sovereign like Numa, founder of a religion, the which is always necessary for the maintenance of civilization, more especially among a people so ferocious as the Romans of that time. And to gain increased authority, he feigned to hold intercourse with a nymph, a means to which Romulus was not constrained to have recourse, but which has been turned to account by other law-givers, and more especially by makers of creeds, the better to win the belief of the people. The religion of the Romans was one of the chief sources of their greatness, inasmuch as it caused the laws to be respected and morality preserved. The sagacious politician will always respect religion, even if he have no belief in it, since there have been frequent proofs that through inculcating it even by craft, much valour has been roused for the defence of the country.¹ In fact, when the Consul Papirius wished to give battle to the Samnites, he called the augurs to ascertain the auspices; and the chief of the Pollarii, seeing that the army was ready for battle, said that the fowls had pecked, although that was not true, as was afterwards discovered. Nevertheless, the Consul gave battle, saying, that were there any deception, it would be punished by the gods, and meanwhile he caused the Pollarii to be placed in the van of the army. Thus when their chief was wounded and killed, he instantly exclaimed that all was going well, since chastisement had come. And the Romans, either in good faith or by calculation, always enforced respect for religion, and found their profit therein.²

"Had the Christian religion been maintained as it was instituted by its founder, things would have gone differently, and men would have been greatly happier. How much, on the

¹ "Discorsi," bk. i. ch. xi. and xii.

² Ibid., bk. i. ch. xiv.

contrary, it has been changed and corrupted, is proved by this, that the peoples nearest to Rome are those having least faith in it. And whoever considers the use made of religion by the Church of Rome and the nature of its manners, must deem its hour of flagellation and destruction to be near at hand. But inasmuch as there are some who believe that the welfare of Italy depends from the Church of Rome, I will allege two very weighty reasons against her." "The first, that by the infamous example of that Court, this land has lost all devotion and all religion. . . . We Italians, then, are first indebted to the Church and the clergy for the loss of our faith and the gain of wickedness; but we likewise owe them another and greater obligation, which is the cause of our ruin. It is that the Church has kept and keeps our country divided. And verily no country was ever united or happy, save under the complete sway of a Republic or a sovereign, as has been the case with France and Spain." "The Church alone has prevented this union in Italy; for having had her seat there and held the temporal power, she has neither been strong enough to occupy it entirely, nor so weak as not to be able, when fearing the loss of the temporal power, to summon a new potentate to defend her against any one threatening to seize it. Thus the Church has been the true cause, for which Italy has never been united under one head, but always divided among many lords and princes, wherefore the land has fallen into such feebleness that it has become the prey of the first who attacked it. For all this we Italians are indebted to the Church and to none else. And if any man should desire to see of what the Church may be capable, let him introduce her among the Swiss, the only nation still living after the fashion of the ancients, and he would see that in a brief space the iniquitous customs of that Court would create more disorder than any other event that could possibly occur."¹

It has been already recognized by all that here, for the first time, the necessity for the unity of Italy was clearly perceived, and the tremendous obstacles always opposed to it by the Church and the temporal power, noted with marvellous depth of observation. Machiavelli's acrimony against the papacy was very great, not only for the reasons herein alleged, but for others also. Chiefly occupied with the idea of constituting the unity of the State, as the supreme aim of the policy and civilization of his time, he was

¹ "Discorsi," bk. i. ch. xii. pp. 54-56.

relentless in his desire for the removal or destruction of everything opposed to that aim. He had, therefore, a supreme contempt for all the mediæval institutions shattering or impeding that unity, especially when they still retained sufficient strength for resistance. For instance, he never desisted from censuring the free companies, and this, not only because in his opinion they had corrupted the art of war by preventing the formation of national armies, but also because they almost constituted, as it were, an independent power within and opposed to the State. He wished to extirpate feudalism, which made impossible the equality that in his ideas, and according to Florentine tradition, was necessary to the Republic, and which, under a Monarchy, was an impediment to the unity of the regal power. Touching the associations of arts and trades dividing and subdividing society during the Middle Ages, he was as silent as though they had never existed, solely because, in his own day, their former vigour had fled. But naturally he had an intense aversion for the Church, which, in her own territories, and together with the temporal power, constituted a State that he deemed monstrous, because of its opposition to every principle of good government. Even outside her special dominions, the Church, with the aid of her religious authority, scattered disorder and confusion everywhere, preventing throughout Italy and obstructing throughout Europe the formation of any nationality.

Added to this there was also that which we have styled the Pagan spirit of Machiavelli, rendering him a grudging admirer, if not an adversary, of the Christian religion, at least in all things bearing on its social and political action. In fact, when he reflected how in ancient times there had been so large a number of free nations, and so much greater liberty than in his day, he believed that he had discovered the cause in the diversity between the Pagan and the Christian religions. "The latter makes us hold of small account the love of this world, and therefore renders us more gentle. The ancients, on the contrary, found their highest delight in this world, and were more ferocious in their actions and in their sacrifices. The religion of the ancients beatified none but men crowned with worldly glory, such as leaders of armies, or founders of Republics; whereas our religion has rather glorified meek and contemplative men, than men of action. It has placed the supreme good in humility and poorness of spirit, and in contempt for worldly things; whereas the other placed it in

greatness of mind, in bodily strength, and in all that gives men daring. Our religion bids them to be strong in endurance rather than in deeds of strength. Thus the world has fallen a prey to the wicked, who have found men readier, for the sake of going to Paradise, to submit to blows than to resent them. But, and here he almost tries to mitigate his too explicit judgments, "if the world has grown thus effeminate and heaven disarmed, it comes rather from the cowardice of those who have interpreted religion, than from religion itself, since this really enjoins the defence of the country, and should therefore render men capable of defending it."¹ Machiavelli's defect, however, was seldom that of tempering and softening his own judgments. On the contrary, he was accustomed to go straight to his aim; and therefore, even when confronted by the hostile forces of political expediency and of private and Christian morality, he never hesitated, never said, like Guicciardini, that these were things only to be discussed in a whisper among friends, to avoid giving scandal. Instead, he wrote words such as these: "Where it is an absolute question of the welfare of our country, we must admit of no considerations of justice or injustice, of mercy or cruelty, of praise or ignominy; but putting all else aside, must adopt whatever course will save its existence and preserve its liberty."²

To suppose that Machiavelli was adverse to virtue and freedom, or even indifferent to them, would be, as we have already observed, a very grave mistake. On the contrary, no one has sounded their praise with greater fervour; but he gives the highest place to public virtue, the only virtue engaging his continual attention, and to which he subordinates and, on occasion, sacrifices every private virtue. Over and over again he tells us that the first praise is due to the founders of religions, the next to founders of monarchies and republics, the next, again, to military leaders, and lastly, to literary men, also—differing in this from all other

¹ "Discorsi," bk. ii. chap. ii. pp. 188, 189. In Mr. Lecky's excellent "History of European Morals" (2 vols.: London, Longmans, 1869), there are certain pages that seem almost copied from Machiavelli. The fundamental conception frequently expounded by Mr. Lecky on this subject is certainly identical with that of the "Discorsi." "A candid examination will show that the Christian civilizations have been as inferior to the Pagan ones in civil and intellectual virtues, as they have been superior to them in the virtues of humanity and chastity. We have already seen that one remarkable feature of the intellectual movement that preceded Christianity, was the gradual decadence of patriotism," &c. (vol. ii. p. 148).

² Ibid., bk. iii. chap. xli.

scholars, but more faithful to antiquity—he always ranks action above thought and speech. “On the other hand,” he continues, “infamous and detestable are the destroyers of religions, of monarchies, of republics; the enemies of virtue, of letters, and of all that is useful to mankind. Nor can there be any one, who, when pushed to choose between the two species of men, will not commend the first and censure the second. Yet, in practice, many prefer to be tyrants, rather than lawgivers and founders of republics or monarchies, being deluded by false appearances and by foolish greed for power. Otherwise they would understand that an Agesilaus and a Timoleon had no less power than a Dionysius and a Phalaris, but rather, were greater and more honoured. Nor should any man let himself be deluded by the glory of Cæsar, on finding him extolled by writers who did not dare to blame him.¹ Let him rather read how they sing the praises of Brutus. Let him call to mind the times of Titus, Nerva, and Trajan, and compare them with the reigns of bad emperors. On the one hand, he will behold citizens enjoying security, magistrates exercising authority; peace, justice, and virtue exalted; all rancour, licence, and corruption extinguished; he will behold golden times in which every man could hold and maintain whatever opinions he chose. If, on the other hand, he considers the times of the rule of bad emperors, he will see them to be full of cruelty, discord, and sedition.” “He will behold Rome in flames, the Capitol demolished by the hands of the citizens, the ancient temples in ruins, all ceremonies debased, cities full of adultery; he will behold the sea covered with exiles, the shores stained with blood. In Rome he will behold cruelties innumerable, and nobility, riches, honour, and, above all, virtue regarded as capital sins. And doubtless, if he be of human birth, he will shrink from any imitation of evil times, and will be inflamed by an immense desire to follow those which were good. And truly, if a prince be in search of worldly glory, he should desire to hold rule over a corrupt city, not to entirely despoil it like Cæsar, but to re-organize it like Romulus.”² Romulus, who did well to murder

¹ German writers have frequently blamed Machiavelli for this judgment of Cæsar, repeatedly pronounced by him. That in these days a very different verdict has been passed upon the character and conduct of Julius Cæsar, especially since all that has been written concerning him by Theodore Mommsen, is beyond all doubt. We must not, however, forget what was the general opinion of him in past times, down to the end of the last century, and almost to our own day.

² “Discorsi,” bk. i. chap. x. pp. 46-48.

his brother Remus, and to allow the murder of his companion Titus Tatius Sabinus !

At this point Machiavelli, in pursuing his own road, found himself compelled to enter on a new order of ideas. So far, he says, he has always reasoned on the supposition that men are not utterly corrupt. When, however, corruption becomes general—as, for example, in Italy at his own day—there are far greater difficulties to be overcome, it being requisite to examine the infinitely various conditions in which peoples and states may happen to be, and the different rules to be observed for their guidance and government under existing circumstances. But to hinder the solution of this problem there was one theory to which Machiavelli constantly clung, that he continually repeated, and frequently used as a starting-point for his researches. In his opinion men were always essentially the same, and the same accidents were perpetually renewed. Indeed, this was the very reason why it was possible to find in the past, by examination of history, precepts and guidance for the regulation of the present and the future.¹ This is what Machiavelli tells us in the "Discourses," and also reiterates in the "Prince," in his comedies, poems,² and every one of his writings. How, then, are we to explain the continuous variety of human vicissitudes and of human society ? Do we not see, as he himself observes, that men always praise the past more than the present ; and does not this, perhaps, prove that they perceive a difference between the one and the other ? Truly, he replies, we often praise the past because it arouses no envy, and because we find it exalted by the great writers of antiquity. "It is certain, however, that human affairs are continually in movement, and always either rising or declining ; wherefore, he who lives while they are in the declining stage, has good reason to laud the past. I believe that the world has always been the same, and always contained as much good as evil, although variously distributed according to the times. Virtue passed from Assyria into Media, went thence to Rome,³ and after the fall of the Empire, no longer remained concentrated in a single country, but was diffused through several : among the Franks,

¹ "Discorsi," bk. i. chap. xxxix. See also bk. iii. chap. xliii.

² Prologue of "Clizia" ; "Asino d'oro," chap. v.

³ Although he afterwards mentions Greece, it should, however, be noted that he does not here name her. For him antiquity was very frequently restricted to Rome and the Empire of Constantinople.

among the Turks, at this day in Germany, and previously in the Saracen tribe that did so many great deeds, and destroyed the Roman Empire in the East. Hence it follows, that he who is born in Greece or Italy, must praise the past and blame the present times, in which there is nothing to compensate for their extreme misery, infamy, and shame ; where there is no observance of religion, of law, or of military discipline. The thing is clearer than sunlight ; wherefore I will plainly declare the conclusion that I derive from it, so that the mind of youth may flee these times and prepare to copy the ancients, since it is the office of an honest man to teach to others that good which, through the malignity of times and fortune, he has not been able to carry into effect." ¹ And in this way he explains the immutability of human nature, the continual repetition of history, and the continual mutation of human events.

Accordingly, the first consequence to which this leads is the necessity of adapting our means and talents to our own times, in order to avoid rushing on certain ruin. " No sooner did Manlius Capitolinus allow himself to be seduced by ambition, than, notwithstanding his many good deeds in the service of his country, every man's hand was against him, and he was doomed to overthrow, for he had failed to discern that the time was ripe for liberty, manners being pure and the Republic firmly constituted. And therefore Titus Livius says : *Hunc exitum habuit vir, nisi in libera civitate natus esset, memorabilis*. He certainly would have been not only a fortunate, but a rare and memorable man, had he been born in a corrupt city, as for instance in Rome during the days of Marius and Sulla ; and these latter, on the other hand, would have been speedily destroyed had they lived in his time. Hence it is needful to know how to adapt yourself to the different conditions of time and place, for no one man can have the power to change the nature of a people.² Since, however, neither can he have the ability to change his own nature, so it follows that fortune has very great influence over human events, causing you to be born in times adapted or adverse to your qualities.) Fabius Maximus, by nature a temporizer, was fortunate in holding command when the Romans were exhausted, and hence incapable of daring and rapid resolves. On the other hand, he was wrong to offer opposition, when Scipio afterwards wished to go to Africa, for then the times had changed, but not his character ; so that

¹ " Discorsi," Proem to bk. ii.

² Ibid., bk. iii. ch. viii.

had it depended upon him, Hannibal would be still in Italy. But such is the nature of men that when they have reached their ends by a certain road, they cannot understand that, the times having changed, success may be won by other methods, and that the old ways are no longer of use. Certainly, did they know how to adapt themselves to and change with the times, they might always be able to succeed in their enterprises; but being too ignorant or reluctant to do this, it follows that fortune has a tremendous power over human events.¹ And against this mysterious force rebellion is vain, for all history clearly proves that men may second fortune, but cannot oppose her; may weave her webs, but cannot break them. Only they should never abandon themselves to despair, since being ignorant to what end fortune may lead, and knowing her to move by tortuous and untraced paths, they should always retain hope, no matter in what straits they may be."²

These ideas finally lead Machiavelli to inquire what should be the conduct of the statesman, and what means should be employed by him when he has to govern a universally corrupt people, and when it is a question of making some substantial change in the form of government, whether by passing from tyranny to liberty or *vice versâ*. The means to be employed in such cases must of necessity be violent. "A people accustomed to live under tyranny, can with great difficulty be trained to live in freedom, inasmuch as it is like a wild and ferocious animal, always fed behind bars; and the new free government will have all the patricians of tyranny arrayed against it." "There is, then, no more potent, nor more valid, nor healthier remedy than to murder the sons of Brutus."³ And for the like reasons "a Prince who would seize the government in his own hands, must build upon the people, without whose favour he will not be able to stand. But with regard to the ambitious who crave for power, he must at once either content them or crush them, even as Clearchus, tyrant of Heraclea, who, when placed between the fury of the people and that of the patricians hated by the people, murdered the latter and thus satisfied the former."⁴ And as a general rule, whoever usurps tyranny without killing Brutus, and whoever founds a free State without killing the sons of Brutus, holds power but for a brief term, as was the case with Piero Soderini, who fell through having tried to vanquish the

¹ "Discorsi," bk. iii. ch. ix.

² Ibid., bk. ii. ch. xxix. p. 288.

³ Ibid., bk. i. ch. xvi. p. 65.

⁴ Ibid., bk. i. ch. xvi. p. 66.

sons of Brutus by kindness.¹ But even when the sons of Brutus have been put to death, a people accustomed to live in servitude cannot by this means at once obtain freedom, unless some man arises to keep them free by force, the which freedom can only last during his life. When the material is incorrupt, riots do no harm ; when corrupt, good laws are useless, unless some man arise to compel their observance by extreme violence and long enough for men to become good ; and I know not if this has ever occurred, or if it be possible that it should occur." ²

"To treat of these almost improbable cases may," says Machiavelli, "appear superfluous ; yet as it is necessary to reason on all things, I will presuppose a most corrupt city, thus increasing all similar difficulties, inasmuch as there can be found neither laws nor institutions adequate to curb a universal corruption. In fact, even as virtuous customs require laws for their maintenance, so these need the former for their observance. And although laws may be changed with facility, it is not the same with political institutions, and much less with the manners and social structure of a people. Liberty," continues Machiavelli, "always implies equality, and sovereignty, inequality. How, for instance, could liberty be established in Milan or Naples, where there is no sort of equality among the citizens ; or who might hope to easily change by law a similar state of things ? To effect a gradual alteration in all this would demand a wise man, able to discern things from a great distance ; but such men are always few, and hardly ever find favour with the multitude. Then, in order to make a sudden reform, it would be necessary to have recourse to arms ; and first of all to make yourself lord of the city in order to dispose of it afterwards according to your will." "And inasmuch as it needs a good man to reorganize the political life of a city, and a bad man to become by violence lord of a Republic, it is therefore very rarely found that a good man will desire to acquire rule by bad means, even for a good end ; or that a bad one, having acquired rule, will act justly, or think of using for good the authority that he has won by evil. From all these above-mentioned things comes the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of maintaining a Republic in corrupt cities, or of creating one afresh. And even were it possible to create or maintain it in like places, it would be necessary to compose it rather as a monarchical than a popular State ; so that those men who by

¹ "Discorsi," bk. iii. ch. iii.

² Ibid., bk. i. ch. xvii.

reason of their insolence cannot be corrected by the laws, may be in some measure restrained by an almost regal authority." *

Passing from these general considerations to an examination of the actual condition of Italy, "it will clearly be seen that in Italy, by reason of her corruption, there is little or nothing to hope, save by the daring and violence of some great man, who may be able and willing to strive for her improvement. In Italy all is corrupt, as in part Spain and France are also corrupt; but in the two latter nations things go much better, as they are already established kingdoms. In Germany, on the other hand, there are well-governed Republics and uncorrupted manners which cause things to go well." And hereupon Machiavelli is roused to give us anew an ideal description of the armed Republics of Germany and Switzerland, where freedom is great and manners golden. "The which goodness," he says, "is all the more admirable in these times, because of its rarity; indeed it has only survived in those countries because they have had little commerce with their neighbours, and thus retained simplicity of life, and forbidden the introduction amongst them of the customs of France, Spain, and Italy, the which nations taken together are the bane of the whole world. In the German Republics there is still the very great advantage of the nobles having been either banished or suppressed; and equality, which is the essential basis of liberty, has thus been preserved."

"Of these nobles," Machiavelli continues, "Naples, Rome, Romagna, and Lombardy are full; whence it comes that those lands have never had any true Republic, nor any political existence; for such races of men are entirely hostile to all civilization, and any man who should undertake to establish order among them could only succeed by first erecting a monarchy, since nothing save the weight of a royal hand and absolute and excessive power could hold in check the excessive ambition and corruption of the nobility. In Tuscany, on the contrary, there are the Republics of Florence, Sienna, and Lucca, and it is apparent that the other cities, even if they have it not, are all desirous of liberty. And all this is because there are no feudal chieftains in those parts, but so much equality, that any sagacious man with some knowledge of the ancient civilizations could easily introduce free institutions among them; but the ill

* "Discorsi," bk. i. ch. xviii. pp. 74, 75.

luck of those provinces has been so great, that down to these days no one has arisen able or willing to effect this."¹

We might, on the other hand, cite the example of Venice, where nobles alone hold office; but they are nobles only in name, since their riches consist of merchandise, and they neither have great estates, nor castles, nor judicial authority over other men. Thus we are always brought to the conclusion that liberty can only be founded on civic equality, and that feudalism is absolutely contrary to every really free and republican institution. Wherever it exists, it is either necessary to establish a monarchy, or to positively put a bloody end to feudalism and extirpate it, before establishing a republic. At that time, too, each of the different provinces of Italy was in a different condition, some being only adapted for the formation of a monarchy, others for that of a republic. And as, without the union of all Italy, it was impossible to convert it into a powerful State, accordingly its condition was almost desperate, it being equally difficult to found either a united republic or a monarchy.

He who would reorganize a city by means of a republic or a free kingdom, must, according to Machiavelli, preserve at least a shadow of its former institutions, so that there may be no apparent change.² He, on the contrary, who would found an absolute monarchy, must alter everything: have a new government, new institutions, new men; must enrich the poor; build new cities; destroy old ones, so that all may be recognized as proceeding from the prince. It is requisite to follow the example of Philip of Macedon, of whom it is told, "that he transferred human beings from province to province, even as herdsmen drive cattle. These are most cruel measures and inimical, not only to all Christian, but all human existence; and every man should avoid them and prefer to live the life of a private individual, rather than be a sovereign at the price of so much destruction of mankind." "But he who will not follow the way of righteousness, must for his own safety enter on the way of evil, and ever eschew those middle courses, which, without rendering him virtuous, are neither profitable to him nor to others."³

Machiavelli was a very persistent opponent of all the half measures which, as he said, hampered the men of his time, and kept them perpetually hesitating between the precepts of

¹ "Discorsi," bk. i. chap. lv.

² Ibid., bk. i. chap. xxv.

³ Ibid., bk. i. chap. xxvi.

Christian morality and political expediency, without thoroughly obeying either the one or the other. "The Romans avoided such measures, deeming them most pernicious ; since government consists in nothing more than in restraining subjects in such wise that they may not harm you, and hence you should either benefit them so as to win their liking, or curb them so that it may be impossible for them to work you harm."¹ And therefore there are three methods of ruling a subject and divided city : by murdering the party leaders, by removing them, or by winning them to peace. The last is the most dangerous method, the first the most secure. But inasmuch as similar deeds are of their nature grand and generous, a feeble republic cannot perform them, and is so incapable of them, that it can barely be led to adopt the second remedy. It is into such errors that the princes of our day always fall, owing to the weakness of this generation, caused by their slender education, and their scanty knowledge of history, which makes them deem ancient methods as partly inhuman and partly impossible. They have certain modern notions of their own far removed from truth, like that judgment of the wise men of our city who said : that it was advisable to hold Pistoia by means of factions, and Pisa by fortresses. They failed to perceive that fortresses were useless, and government by means of factions always a danger. In fact, when a prince governs by such means, he has always one party against him ; this party will seek aid from without, and thus at the first occasion he will have foes both within and without the walls. If, too, the government be a republic, it can find no better means of dividing itself ; as happened to the Florentines, who, by seeking to reunite Pistoia by means of parties, only succeeded in creating division among themselves.²

Yet notwithstanding past and present experience, the men of our time always prefer half measures. Of this we have had a recent and notable example, when Julius II., alone and without an army, entered Perugia to drive out Giovan Paolo Baglioni. Sagacious men could not then understand why the latter did not seize Pope, Cardinals, and all their rich belongings. "It could neither be goodness nor conscience that restrained him, since no pious respect could have a place in the bosom of a guilt-stained man who had seduced his own sister, and murdered his cousins and nephews in order to reign ; but they arrived at the conclu-

¹ "Discorsi," bk. ii. chap. xxiii.

² Ibid., bk. iii. chap. xxvii. p. 397.

sion that men do not know how to be honourably bad, or perfectly good ; and as a completely wicked act has some greatness or some element of generosity, so they cannot perform it. Thus Giovanpagolo, who had not shrunk from incest and public parricide, could not, or rather dared not, even on a just occasion, accomplish an enterprise for which every one would have admired his courage, and which would have procured him eternal remembrance as the first man to show prelates of how little account are those who live and rule after their fashion, and who would thereby have done a deed whose greatness would have surpassed every infamy, and every danger that might have ensued from it."¹

Nevertheless, observes Machiavelli, force, courage and violence do not always suffice, especially for rising from mean fortunes to great. "Frequently fraud and stratagem are also required ; indeed, fraud alone may sometimes suffice, but never force alone. Zenophon, in his life of Cyrus, teaches us the necessity of deceit ; since the latter's first expedition against the King of Armenia was full of fraud, and succeeded by stratagem, not violence. And the observance of this method is necessary, not only to princes, but likewise to republics, at least until their power be consolidated, as is proved by the example of the Romans."² Elsewhere, too, he tries to explain that he does not intend the unconditional praise of fraud. "Although of its nature fraud is always detestable, yet its use may sometimes be necessary, and even, as in warfare, for instance, glorious. In fact, he who overcomes his enemies by fraud is no less extolled than he that overcomes them by force. Of which we may read so many examples, that I need not quote any." "I will only say this, that I discern no glory in fraud that makes you break your pledged word and settled terms, for such fraud, even if it may sometimes win you states and kingdoms, as we have treated of above, will never win you glory. But I speak of the fraud that is directed against the enemy who does not trust you, and which really consists in your management of the war."³

From all that we have thus far noted, it is very clear that Machiavelli pronounces no judgment on the moral value of individual deeds, but on their practical effect as political actions. This, indeed, is always the predominant characteristic of his

¹ "Discorsi," bk. i. ch. xxvii.

² Ibid., bk. ii. ch. xiii.

³ Ibid., bk. iii. ch. xl.

political writings, and we see another most lucid example of it in his lengthy chapter upon conspiracies.¹

Here he has quite the aspect of a physiologist making experiments in vivisection, and using his anatomical knife to dissect the different organs and ascertain their functions. Conspiracies are hatched against those rulers who are most generally hated. Then, private injuries to life, honour and property usually give animus to revenge. As to injury to life, the threatening of it is far more dangerous than its actual performance, since dead men cannot think of vengeance, and their survivors often leave the care of it to the dead. Far more dangerous then are injuries to property and honour, for the prince can never so entirely despoil a man that he have not a dagger left him with which to wreak vengeance; nor dishonour a man so thoroughly as to deprive him of an obstinate impulse to revenge."² Plots are also woven from the sole desire of freeing the country; but in such case princes have no resource save that of renouncing their tyranny, and as they will not do this, they often therefore come to a bad end.

Besides, conspirators incur danger by their deeds, both before and after. First of all they are betrayed by spies, by surmises, or their own imprudence. The sole remedy in this case is to instantly communicate the matter to your comrades, to compromise them, and then act as quickly as possible. Sometimes this haste is imposed by the necessity you find yourself in of doing unto the prince that which he is about to do unto you. Thus it drives men forward in a way that brings them success, and therefore princes should beware of uttering threats, which in such cases are most dangerous. Peril on the actual outbreak of a conspiracy comes from either changing the plan already established, or from failure of courage, or from errors of imprudence, or from leaving part of the enterprise incomplete when it is a question of putting many persons to death. Once the mind is fixed on a settled mode of action, it is most perilous to change it all of a sudden; it is far better to carry out the original design even at some inconvenience or hazard. Then courage sometimes fails at the moment of action, either from reverence for the prince or from cowardice. Hence it is always necessary to choose tried men, "because without experience no one can know what courage he

¹ "Discorsi," bk. iii. ch. vi. "Delle congiure."

² Ibid., bk. iii. p. 316.

may have in great emergencies." ¹ "Also, it may be that sudden and unexpected dangers supervene ; but concerning these we can only reason by precedent, to induce men to greater caution, and nothing else. Of all dangers, however, that for which conspirators can find no remedy is when the people is well affectioned to the prince." And so this chapter goes on to the end examining and drawing distinctions with a truly remarkable lucidity, penetration and knowledge of human nature.

But we must not forget that the chief argument of the work, the central point of all Machiavelli's theories, is ever the foundation of the State, the stable and enduring formation of its organic unity by the efforts of the legislator, no less in the event of this legislator desiring or being compelled to found a monarchy, than in that of his having instead the good fortune or magnanimity to be founder of a republic, and acting in such wise that, after his death, his government may remain standing in the charge of the people, which is always better able to maintain than to establish it. And here the question arises, in what way Machiavelli proposed to constitute this unity, and especially republican unity, when, in his day, the liberty of republics was restricted to the dominant city, by which all others were kept in subjection? We have seen that Guicciardini had already noted, although merely stating the fact without drawing any other conclusion from it, that it was really better to become subject to a monarchy than to a republic ; because the former treated all its subjects alike, while the second sought to limit the benefits of liberty solely to its citizens proper.) Machiavelli made the same observation, when he wrote that the heaviest servitude is that imposed under a republic, inasmuch as it is more lasting, and because the aim of the republic is to enervate and weaken all others in order to increase its own stability ; and no prince will attempt this unless he be some barbarous destroyer of countries, and devastator of all human civilization, similar to the princes of the East. For if he have some humanity and rectitude, he will bear equal affection towards every city beneath his sway." ²

However, Machiavelli does not content himself, like Guicciardini, with noting down the fact and then passing on to other subjects. He again affirms that the method pursued by the mediæval republics was extremely bad, perilous and destructive. "Republics," he says, "have three modes of aggrandizing their

¹ "Discorsi," bk. iii. ch. vi. p. 331.

² Ibid., bk. ii. ch. ii. p. 191.

States : First, by confederation among themselves on the Etruscan or Swiss plan ; secondly, by placing the conquered on the same footing with themselves, although in such wise as to retain the supreme command, the seat of empire and the glory of their common enterprises, which was the plan pursued by the Romans ; thirdly, by creating subjects and not associates, as did the Spartans and the Athenians. This third method is of all the worst, since to undertake to hold and govern cities by violence, especially those which have been used to freedom, is a difficult and wearisome matter. To carry it out with success it is necessary to be very strongly armed, and to enlarge cities by adding many strangers to the population. Sparta and Athens failed to do this, and therefore were destroyed. It was instead done by the Romans, who at the same time also followed the second method, and grew powerful. First of all they made the peoples of Italy their colleagues, binding all to themselves by common laws, but invariably retaining rule and empire in their own grasp. Afterwards, with the aid of these colleagues, they subjugated foreign peoples, who, having been under the dominion of monarchs, were not accustomed to liberty. And therefore, when the Italians tried to rebel, the Romans were already very strong and could reduce them to submission, having first known how to increase their own cities by means of foreigners, inasmuch as they understood the need of imitating nature, and that no slender stem can ever sustain a stalwart tree. Then, as regards the first method, that of a confederation, it was that which was observed by the Etruscans, who by means of the union of twelve cities, governed by a league, were very mighty both in warfare and commerce, and held in respect from the Tiber to the Alps.

"Such confederations do not acquire extensive dominions, but keep all that they gain, and are not exposed to hostile attack. It is plain to see why they do not attain to great power. A republic that is divided and has several centres cannot carry on its deliberations with ease and readiness ; it has no craving for dominion that must be shared among many. It is also demonstrated by facts, that these confederations never exceed the twelve Republics of the Etruscans, or the fourteen of the Swiss, and thus have almost settled limits.¹ In cases where there is neither the desire nor

¹ It is plain that he had now read what Aristotle had written on "divided republics," of which Vettori had spoken to him, and that his exaggerated belief in the future power of the Swiss was somewhat diminished.

possibility of following this method, aggrandizement by the subjection and oppression of the subjects is a system that proved injurious even to armed republics like Sparta and Athens, and will always be ruinous to unarmed republics like ours. The truest and best method then is that pursued by the Romans, of creating comrades and not subjects, and it was the more praiseworthy in them, inasmuch as they were the first to adopt it; they had had no predecessors on that road, nor was their example afterwards imitated by others. In fact, although to this day we have the example of the Swiss and the Suabian leagues, Roman institutions have never been copied by any one; on the contrary, no one considers them of much account, in part because they are deemed false, in part impossible, in part unfitting and useless. So it comes about, that thanks to this ignorance of ours, we are the prey of every one that chooses to assail this land. And should there seem to be any difficulty in the imitation of the Romans, none such need be found in that of the ancient Tuscans, especially by the Tuscans of these times; for although the former, on account of the reasons we have quoted, could not found an empire like that of Rome, they acquired in Italy all the power that can be acquired by a government of leagues." *

We must call to mind all the principal political writers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Italy, all the then most universally and unreservedly accepted ideas, in order to understand the immense effort Machiavelli must have made in order to free himself from them and attain to a lucid conception of the unity of the State. It is true that he does not arrive at any scientific definition of it, does not go so far as to proclaim that all subjects should be citizens and equal before the law, and that all, either directly or indirectly, should share in the government of the State. But for this we have to wait until the eighteenth century and the French revolution. Machiavelli, as we have seen, puts aside and repudiates feudalism, mercenary troops, the political power of the guilds of arts and trades, the temporal dominion of the Popes and their interference in the State, of which he desires the unity, strength and independence. And he was also the first to see that this organic unity could not be established until subjects were treated as equals and not as inferiors. And to these ideas, which constitute a genuine event in the history of political science, he continually recurs with varying clearness, but with unvarying faith and

* "Discorsi," bk. ii. chap. iv.

constancy. "France has frequently taken possession of Genoa, has held it by force, and has always lost it. Now at last, constrained by necessity, she allows it local government, with a Genoese at its head, and holds it in a far firmer grasp. Men are all the readier to throw themselves into your arms, the less you appear disposed to compel them, and the more you show yourself humane and familiar with them, the less they dread you as regards their liberty."¹ He then quotes the example of how Capua spontaneously requested the Romans to give them a Prætor, and continues: "But what need to recur to Capua or Rome, when we find examples in Tuscany? Pistoia gave herself to the Florentines of her own will; Lucca, Pisa and Sienna were always hostile. And that was not because the Pistoiese had less love of liberty than the others, or held themselves of less account; but because the Florentines had always treated them as brothers, while treating the others as foes." "And there is no doubt that had the Florentines, either by means of treaties or acts of kindness, tamed their neighbours instead of driving them wild,² they would at this moment be lords of all Tuscany. By this I do not mean to say that we should never have recourse to arms and violence, but only that such methods should be reserved to the last, when all others shall have failed."³

And if in the sixteenth century it was impossible for Machiavelli to arrive at a full, precise, and scientific definition of the true organic unity of the State, that is, to this day, so much disputed a theme, neither, and for the same reasons, could he succeed in exactly determining its historic and natural development. Yet he had an intuitive sense even of this, and frequently recurred to it, although somewhat vaguely. At the beginning of the third book he pauses to say, that for governments and institutions to have long life, they must be organized in such a way as to be often able to recur to their fundamental principles. This maxim has been praised by many, without being fully understood. On the other hand, Capponi considers it erroneous, and charges Machiavelli with keeping his eyes turned behind him, and seeking the remedy of things outside their limits, *i.e.*, "in their vanished elements."⁴

¹ "Discorsi," bk. ii. chap. xxi. p. 257.

² In the original text Machiavelli writes *i suoi vicini* (his neighbours) instead of *i loro vicini* (their neighbours). As is well known, Machiavelli frequently makes grammatical blunders of this kind.

³ "Discorsi," bk. ii. chap. xxi. p. 258.

⁴ "Storia della Repubblica di Firenze," vol. ii. bk. vi. chap. vii. p. 366.

But all who carefully study this chapter will perceive that Machiavelli did not seek help and strength for institutions from without. His wish was to draw them continually back, not to their past, but to the principles according to which and on which they were based ; and the examples he frequently adduces throw additional light upon his idea. "Before the seizure of Rome by the Gauls its institutions were not respected, and the three Fabii who fought the Gauls, *contra jus gentium*, were left unpunished and created Tribunes. Then, when the catastrophe came and the danger had been felt, they were punished, and religion and law once more enforced. In Rome the Tribunes, the Censors and all the laws against the ambitious were intended to continually recall the Republic to its primitive principles. Sometimes the simple virtue of a great man is sufficient to lead a people back to liberty and purity of manners, although institutions are always more efficacious. Possibly the Christian religion would have been entirely extinguished by its corruption, had not St. Francis and St. Dominic, founders of new orders, restored it to its original principles." "Likewise, kingdoms need renovation and the re-establishment of their laws on the old basis. And we may discern the good effect of this in the kingdom of France, the which kingdom is more submissive to the laws and to order than any other. The which laws and order are maintained by Parliaments, particularly by that of Paris, which renews them whenever it issues a decree against a prince of that kingdom, and whenever it condemns the king by its verdicts. And up to this time it has maintained itself by its persistence in upholding justice against the French nobles ; but should it ever allow one of these to go unpunished, or permit them to multiply, it would doubtless happen, either that they would have to be corrected with much violence, or that the kingdom would be dissolved."¹ Now we may question whether Machiavelli's idea was always expressed with much clearness, and we may find some difficulty in defining it with precision, but we cannot say that he sought remedies for endangered institutions beyond the bounds of those institutions. Recurrence to their first principles here signifies a return to the fundamental conception of him who had created them ; since, as we are aware, in Machiavelli's eyes, laws, religions, and governments were the achievement and personal creation of the legislator, this being always the sole way in which he conceived and understood their organic unity.

¹ "Discorsi," bk. iii. chap. i. p. 306.

To firmly maintain the legislator's fundamental conception, and to return to it whenever there had been any deviation, was therefore the only means of keeping institutions alive and ensuring their natural development.

This development is the work of the people, to whom the legislator must entrust the defence and welfare of the country. As, however, the people may stray from the right path, so it is necessary to forecast the way to lead them back, which will always be easier than to lead back a prince, inasmuch as peoples are always better than princes. "These latter," continues Machiavelli, "are more ungrateful than peoples, whose ingratitude is ever less injurious, being born of error, and not of ambition or corruption of mind, as is generally the case with princes. Also the people is much wiser. And although the contrary opinion is prevalent, being even maintained by Titus Livy, I will venture to assert against all, that the people is more constant, more judicious, more prudent than any prince." "And it is not without reason that the voice of a people is compared to the voice of a god; for we see that a universal opinion produces marvellous effects by its prognostications, so that it would seem to have an occult gift of foreseeing its evil and its good." It is capable of accepting the truth it hears, and is superior to the prince in the election of magistrates. Nor will a people ever be persuaded that it is good to raise any infamous person, or one of corrupt life to high estate, whereas a prince may be easily and in a thousand ways persuaded to do so. And truly we may by speech win over a licentious people; but with a bad prince steel is the only remedy. And it has ever been seen that, "those cities wherein the people is lord, make the greatest increase in the shortest time, and far greater than any increase that has ever happened under a prince. And although princes are superior to peoples in ordaining laws, forming civil institutions, organizing statutes and new institutions, peoples are so superior in the maintenance of organized things, that they undoubtedly add to the glory of those who first organized them." And it is no marvel that free cities should make greater conquests and have greater prosperity, "because it is not the good of the individual, but the good of the community that constitutes the greatness of cities. And it is beyond doubt that only in republics is the common welfare considered. When there is a prince it happens on the contrary, that which is good for him is hurtful to

* "Discorsi," bk. i. chap. lviii.

the city, and that which is good for the city is hurtful to him. So that where tyranny has taken the place of free institutions, the least evil that can happen to that city is that it should make no farther progress."¹

And whenever Machiavelli enters upon this train of thought, his enthusiasm continually re-awakens, and he always lauds to the skies the old republican times which were his constant ideal. "Quintius Cincinnatus, when proclaimed consul, was found labouring with his own hands on his little farm, and Marcus Regulus, while in the command of armies in Africa, begged for leave of absence in order to attend to a country house, that had been damaged by his workmen. Thus these citizens made war for the sake of glory alone." "When placed at the head of an army their greatness of soul exalted them above all princes; they cared neither for monarchs nor republics; nothing ever terrified or alarmed them, and on their return to private life, they became frugal, humble, careful of their slender means, obedient to the magistrates, reverent towards their superiors; so that it might well seem impossible that one and the same mind could withstand so many changes."² "And such were always the results of free institutions and popular governments; results which are never obtained by a monarchy, and especially not by an absolute monarchy, although this is the only useful kind, and positively needful, whenever it is a question of reuniting a nation, or founding a State, after the fashion of Romulus, Lycurgus, and Solon. If, however, such principality should last long, and not leave the care of government to the people, or at least if the prince do not share it with the people, as the kings of France share it with Parliament, then the evil is instantly felt. It is true that the Dictatorship was an absolute power and yet did no harm to the Roman Republic; but it was likewise a legal and temporary power, neither usurped nor perpetual, which is that which works evil.³ Although legal, the power of the decemviri was very hurtful to Rome, for then the consuls and tribunes were suppressed and the people almost abdicated its authority. Unlimited and unrestrained power is always hurtful; for even when the people is not already corrupted, it speedily becomes so.⁴ In fact, it was seen how rapidly the power of Appius Claudius was increased by the favour of the people, and had he made use of this favour to

¹ "Discorsi," bk. ii. chap. ii.

³ Ibid., bk. i. chap. xxxv.

² Ibid., bk. iii. chap. xxv. pp. 393, 394.

⁴ Ibid., bk. i. chap. xxxv.

extinguish the patricians in order then to dominate the people, he might at once have established a tyranny. Instead, he joined with the patricians against the people, thus incurring its enmity and bringing about his own fall, since he who commits violence should be more powerful than those on whom violence is committed; wherefore, in order to establish a tyranny with only the aid of a few within the walls, it is at least necessary to make provision for assistance from without."¹

With this we may bring our examination of the "Discorsi" to a close, merely remarking that many chapters of the second book, and a few of the third, are devoted to the art of war held by Machiavelli to be so essential a part of the art of government. However, as he has written a special work upon war, containing a fuller development of the same ideas, it will be better to explain those ideas in their proper place. At present, it is enough to call attention to the two most remarkable points. These are: the enormous contempt and almost hatred felt by Machiavelli for the free companies and free captains which he considered the scourge and ruin of Italy; and his almost boundless belief in the efficacy of a national militia, on the model of that of the Romans. With respect to all these things he was in advance of his time; and by recurring as usual to Roman examples, became a prophet of the future. But, on the other hand, he showed very little faith in fire-arms, and not much more in fortresses. The latter, he says, are of scant use, if intended for defence against external enemies, and they are positively hurtful, if intended to serve against your own subjects. A prince needs strongholds only when he is hated for his bad government; they then give him courage to persevere in evil, whereas they become altogether useless to him when the indignant people revolts in earnest, or the enemy knocks at the gates, especially now that there is ordnance—to which Machiavelli at this point rather inconsistently attributes an importance that elsewhere he seems to altogether deny it. "A prince must either establish himself on the love of his subjects, or must keep a powerful army and try to trample down the people, but must never place his reliance in fortresses. The fortress of Milan, erected by Francesco Sforza, did not preserve his heirs either from internal or external enemies. Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, on his restoration to his States, from which he had been expelled by Cæsar Borgia, made wary by experience, pulled down

¹ "Discorsi," bk. i. chap. xl.

the fortresses, which had proved useless for his defence, and only serviceable to his enemy, and placed his sole reliance on the affection of his own subjects. Still more worthy of note is the example lately furnished us by Genoa. Every one knows how, in 1507, this city rebelled against Louis XII. of France, and that the formidable stronghold he then built there proved of no service in 1512, when the French being driven from Italy, the town rose in revolt. Then Ottaviano Fregoso, after starving out the garrison, had the sagacity to demolish the citadel, and established his power, not upon stone walls, but upon the love of the people and his own merits and prudence. By these means he holds the city to this day ; and whereas formerly a thousand foot-soldiers sufficed to upset the Genoese State, now his adversaries have brought ten thousand to the attack, and nevertheless failed to do him any hurt. Brescia was taken notwithstanding its fortress ; the Florentines who built the castle of Pisa, found that it only served the purpose of the Pisans, and did not understand that they ought to have followed the example of the Romans, *i.e.*, by giving the city equality with themselves, or else destroying it. The Romans in all territories they wished to hold by force, knocked walls down instead of building them up." ¹ In conclusion, then, according to Machiavelli, some strongholds might be useful at the frontiers ; but in general it was necessary to trust only in the love of subjects or in armed forces, after the example of Sparta and Rome. The petty tyrannies established in Italian cities by *coups de main*, and maintained by the aid of a few adherents, or of a fortress, in which the prince was often obliged to take shelter, were henceforth doomed to total disappearance.

¹ " Discorsi," book ii. chap. xxiv.



CHAPTER III.

Criticism on the "Discourses"—The "Reflections" of Guicciardini upon the "Discourses."



THE exposition we have given of the "Discourses" in the preceding chapter, if without furnishing a reply, may have recalled to the reader the usual question: whether Machiavelli's aims were good or evil? Was he honest or dishonest? Thus we are once more brought face to face with the sphinx, whose enigma no one can explain. And it is a problem that will always remain unsolved so long as it is presented to us in the same way. The narrative of Machiavelli's life can acquaint us with the character of the man; but the examination of his works must first of all teach us the worth of his doctrines. And this is no psychological nor personal question, but a general question and one of political science. It does not hinge on the inquiry whether Machiavelli sought good or evil; but rather whether he succeeded in discovering and expounding truth. His character serves to explain to us rather the form than the substance of his doctrines, of which the source must be looked for less in the nature of the man, than in the mind of the thinker. That he trod a new road is recognized by all. That his reflections upon history, upon the rise and decline of States, on the connection of events, on the sequence of parties in Rome and in Florence are most admirable, no one puts in doubt. So, too, all acknowledge his method to be excellent, his eloquence very great, his political psychology far superior to that of his contemporaries, not excepting Guicciardini; for

Machiavelli was not satisfied, like all the rest, with regarding society as a simple aggregate of individuals, whose passions had to be held in equilibrium. He sought and desired the social unity of the State ; he studied the passions of the people, aristocracy, and princes, and recognized that these were not purely individual or personal passions. Nevertheless, the final object of his researches and science was ever the exhibition of precepts regarding the political conduct to be observed by Statesmen. It is only when we find him advising actions we deem to be dishonest, and sometimes positively iniquitous, that our conscience irresistibly reacts and rebels, so that we are almost led to deny the very admiration which the writer had previously aroused in us. It is no explanation to say that he preached such precepts, because both he and his own times, which he simply describes, were equally bad. How was it that Guicciardini, a no better man than he, did not arrive at the same conclusions? How was it that Giannotti and the many other politicians and historians of those days never offered immoral counsels? Would not the mere fact of raising a description of corrupt times to the rank of precepts and permanent instructions to statesmen be an error so grave as to withdraw all solidity and stability from the very basis of a general system of political doctrines? Machiavellism is no capricious and accidental fact in the history of human thought. For its due comprehension and judgment, we must investigate, without forgetting the personal and psychological causes determining its physiognomy, the logical and historical causes which led to its appearance.

We have seen what was Machiavelli's starting-point. To reorganize a corrupt city, to found a nation or a State, requires a legislator like Romulus, Solon, or Lycurgus. These, when their work was complete, confided its development and defence to the people, thus rendering it a beneficial and lasting achievement. But its inauguration was and, according to Machiavelli, must always be the deed of one alone, who to wisdom and grandeur of soul also unites strength and absolute power. This conception had arisen in his mind, because in his search for and study of social unity in the pages of history, it had struck him in a very different light from that in which it had been contemplated in the Middle Ages, and equally different from the light in which it is contemplated by ourselves. To our eyes society appears to be a living organism, having birth, growth,

and development, almost as the natural product, the inevitable consequence of a nation's character and history ; as, to a great extent, the result of an impersonal labour, that the legislator has only to co-ordinate and determine.

Machiavelli, on the contrary, regarded it as the work and creation of the Statesman, of the political genius, who was not the representative of the popular conscience, but rather gave the people whatever impress, form, and almost conscience he chose. That which we now style impersonal, unconscious labour, is an idea of essentially modern birth, that was altogether unknown to the Renaissance and to Machiavelli. He was well aware that the work of the people was joined to that of the legislator, and precisely for that reason he asserted that the one continued, preserved, and completed the work of the other. The power to initiate and create institutions always rested with the legislator. Therefore the power conferred upon him by Machiavelli in the "Discourses," the "Prince," and the "Histories," seems almost unbounded. At one moment he makes the legislator drive populations from place to place, as herds are driven ; at another he makes him change a republic into a monarchy, or *vice versâ*. Elsewhere he states "that it is truer than any other truth, that if a prince has subjects and not soldiers, he should rather blame himself than the nature and cowardice of mankind.¹ And princes are ever the guilty cause of the sin and corruption of peoples. In our days we have seen Romagna flooded with blood and vengeance by the deeds of covetous princes, who made laws and then urged their violation, in order to enrich themselves by the fines they imposed. And only on their destruction, by the hand of Cæsar Borgia, was order re-established in that land."²

We have already observed elsewhere that according to Machiavelli, the people in the hands of its legislator was as soft clay in the hands of the sculptor. Its moulding in the shape of a republic or a monarchy, of a democracy or an aristocracy, was not effected, according to the varying circumstances, by some historical necessity, that no one could nor might oppose ; it depended on the courage and will of the Statesman, who was certain of success if he knew his art and went straight to his end, without ever straying into side paths. Sometimes it would

¹ "Discorsi," bk. i. chap. xxi. p. 79, and bk. iii. chap. xxxviii. p. 430.

² Ibid., bk. iii. chap. xxix. entitled : "Che gli peccati dei popoli nascono dai principi."

almost appear as though the personal deity of the theological schools of the Middle Ages had come down to earth incarnated in the shape of Machiavelli's no less omnipotent legislator. If he did not, as was said of Bossuet's God, guide all the peoples of the earth, as a charioteer guides his fiery steeds, he shaped, almost created his people, and led it in whatever direction he chose. Placed in a thoroughly exceptional position, even as the God in whose image he was made, above and beyond society, with the power of manipulating it according to his own pleasure, there is no longer any moral standard by which we can estimate his actions. These acquired an independent, impersonal value, and were neither honest nor dishonest in the true sense of the word ; but useful or harmful, praiseworthy or blameworthy, accordingly as they did or did not attain the proposed end ; accordingly as that end was, or was not, to the advantage, not of a few individuals, but of society at large. Did one or more men prove a hindrance to the power of the legislator, and the reorganization of the State, the legislator was not to hesitate to rid himself of them in the way he thought best, even, when necessary, by force, fraud, or betrayal. Did he shrink from the performance of similar inhuman and cruel actions, it was better for him to retire into private life, where alone it was possible to abstain from them. Indeed, the first condition to be fulfilled by Machiavelli's pattern legislator was precisely that of entirely divesting himself of his private personality, and of disregarding the charge of unscrupulousness, so long as he kept in view his one great purpose, the good of his country ; before which all other considerations, not only of private interest, but of honesty or dishonesty, were bound to give way. And then, "even though facts accuse him, it must needs be that results will justify him." To Machiavelli it seemed idle to inquire whether a political action was moral or immoral according to the standard established for private deeds, for his world of politics was ruled by substantially different laws.

Nevertheless, his reflections produce a very singular effect on the mind of the modern reader. We continually pass from the deepest disgust, and even horror, to the sincerest admiration, without being able altogether to account for these perpetual alternations of almost openly contradictory feelings. It might be said that instead of comprehending the sphinx by force of gazing upon it, we end by becoming a sphinx-like enigma to ourselves.¹

¹ Macaulay remarks, in his eloquent Essay upon Machiavelli : "The whole

While revolted by the immorality of Machiavelli's precepts, we are filled with admiration and almost fascinated by the truth of his judgments. The legislator, the "Principe," whom we so often detest, seems the spontaneous and natural product of the realities by which Machiavelli was surrounded; for, in fact, it is very plain that although this type was partly derived from antiquity and from his own imagination, it was also a faithful portraiture from life. Accordingly the writer's marvellous realism seems to cast a flash of light on the events of history, revealing new truths, which in their turn, however, become still more involved in mystery the more violently they clash against our conscience, whenever they are transformed into precepts and claim authority over us in the name of reason.

Machiavelli beheld the Italian Republics which had lapsed into anarchy, rapidly and inevitably converted into despotic governments. But no sooner any party leader of superior audacity, intelligence, or ambition stepped forward to seize the reins of government, weapons were instantly employed against him. Hence he was either compelled to withdraw, or prevented from observing any rule of morality, save the only one possible in a state of anarchy and warfare. He had to oppose dagger to dagger, poison to poison; to deceive and betray; to be at the same time wily as the fox and brave as the lion; to treat men as tools, to be cast aside when no longer needed. Once master of the State, all things depended on his will, and he had to provide for everything, unless he wished to lose everything. In conditions such as these any attempt to act with loyalty, honesty, or humanity, would at once cause the ruler to be overwhelmed by bloodshed or ridicule, and ensure his ruin, without profit to others. But when the Prince succeeded, although by violence and fraud, in grasping power, establishing government, bestowing security and justice on the citizens, then all joined in sounding his praises. And had Machiavelli then asked himself what and where were the men

man seems to be an enigma, a grotesque assemblage of incongruous qualities, selfishness and generosity, cruelty and benevolence, craft and simplicity, abject villany and romantic heroism. . . . An act of dexterous perfidy and an act of patriotic self-devotion call forth the same kind and the same degree of respectful admiration. The moral sensibility of the writer seems at once to be morbidly obtuse and morbidly acute. Two characters altogether dissimilar are united in him. They are not merely joined, but interwoven" (Macaulay's "Essays," Leipzig, 1850, vol. i. p. 63). We shall speak later on of this Essay's merits and defects.

who succeeded in ruling according to humanity and Christian goodness, certainly it would not have been easy, nor even possible to find them. What was the history of the Visconti, of Ezzelino da Romano, of the Sforza, or the Aragonese? If he turned his glance towards the heads of the Christian religion, he beheld the iniquitous arts of governments practised by men like Sixtus IV., Innocent VIII., and Alexander VI.

Undoubtedly it might be objected that all this resulted from the decadence and moral corruption of Italy, and that it would therefore be better to seek elsewhere for a model of good government. But on looking beyond the Alps, Machiavelli only found new and stronger confirmation of his theories. Did not all know the cruel tricks and stratagems of Louis XI., who, nevertheless, succeeded by their means in initiating the unity and greatness of France? Was not Ferdinand the Catholic a master of deceit, and yet had he not, together with Queen Isabella, founded the new monarchy of Spain? Was not England, was not all Europe overflowing with treason and bloodshed?¹ And if he looked back to the Middle Ages, did he not find still greater barbarity, ferocity, and iniquity of all kinds? Did not Rome and Greece furnish examples of most cruel and violent men in those illustrious founders of States, whom tradition and legend had exalted almost to heaven, and to a level with the gods? Did not ancient writers accord the highest praise to the most atrocious crimes, whenever these were advantageous to the national greatness? Of what avail then, concluded Machiavelli, to imagine ideal governments which have never been and can never be? Of what use to recommend a course of policy that is followed by none, nor has ever been followed, and that would prove the ruin of him who should follow it?

To all this, however, we may reply by the inquiry, whether a mind like his was not bound to discern the diversity of the times and of mankind? It was clear that Christians could not observe a pagan morality in public life, any more than they observed it in private. The Middle Ages were a period of barbarism, and the

¹ These points have all been treated with much truth and learning, by Professor Andrea Zambelli in the fine reflections on the "*Principe*," republished in his volume entitled, "*Machiavelli, Il Principe*," &c. Florence, Le Monnier, 1857. But, as we shall see, this author is one who refers everything to the influence of the times. He appears to think that, in order to justify Machiavelli and Italy, it is enough to prove that the rest of Europe was equally corrupt and followed a no less immoral policy.

Renaissance one of transition and transformation. Could he not perceive that better and more normal times might and must follow when it would not only be possible, but requisite, to pursue the more honest and more moral political conduct, which should be the aim of science and the only conduct accepted by it as a rule? But on this head he found an insurmountable obstacle in another of the fundamental theories already laid down by him in the "Discourses," and from which, in his day, it was impossible to diverge. In all his works, not only political and historical, but likewise literary, Machiavelli reiterates a thousand times, both in prose and verse, that men are always the same, that their nature knows no change, and that the same accidents are perpetually repeated in the world. Indeed, were this not the case, no science of government would, he thinks, be practicable, since it would then be impossible to base any rule for the present and future on the experience of the past. Laws, institutions, and governments change, virtue and vice are differently distributed in different lands, whence the continuous variety of incidents; but mankind remains ever the same. And for this reason, when acquainted with wise laws and good institutions, especially such as those of the Romans, we may safely re-model States after the virtuous pattern of the ancients.

At the present day it is very difficult for us to form an accurate conception of this mode of viewing things, or to measure its entire consequences, since we have long passed into a totally different order of ideas. According to our conceptions, man continually changes, and laws, institutions, governments, and manners change with him, inasmuch as they are the result of his activity, and product of his brain. Thus, were there no change in man, there would be no alteration in society. But as all proceeds from man, so man is responsible for all; wherefore, he who obeys two different laws of conduct in public and private life, must answer for both to his conscience and reconcile it with both. Accordingly, for us everything is co-ordinated and organically constituted in society, which, like man, is subject to the law of historic evolution, has a personality and responsibility of its own, and becomes more moral, as individual morality progresses, since it cannot be admitted that the one should be the negation or entirely independent of the other. Certainly this forms no hindrance to our belief in the ever immutable principles of morality, nor in the fixed laws and unity of human nature. But this unity is not

immoveable, is indeed, to use Hegel's expression, in continual course of *becoming*, is organic and living, and history is its life. (Even, nay specially, for us moderns, study of the past is indispensable to knowledge of the present; not, however, because these are identical, but rather because the present contains the elements of the past from which it is derived. Thus psychology, politics, jurisprudence, social science found in history their secure and indispensable basis; they were no longer, *à priori*, abstract sciences with unalterable phenomena, but experimental and concrete sciences with ever-changing phenomena, the laws of whose changes have to be discovered.

But we cannot be surprised that Machiavelli had none of these ideas, when we remember that even in the eighteenth century they had not yet penetrated into science. Why, in fact, did writers then explain the origin of society by the social contract; the origin of languages by a species of stipulated agreement among men; the origin of mythologies by the artificial inventions of philosophers, who for popular use clothed abstract truths in concrete shapes? Solely because they had not yet succeeded in comprehending the profound difference between primitive man and the man of their own day. Even for the philosophers of the eighteenth century human nature was immutable, and they had not the faintest idea of historic evolution. How can we otherwise account for their false theory of a state of nature? They believed that if man were emancipated from the bonds of society and restored to a forest life, he would find himself in a sort of earthly paradise, in a primitive state of innocence and goodness, and exempt from all social corruption; just as though society were not the only natural state for man, and as though outside of it, he did not lapse into brutal savagery; just as though morality and civilization were not the results of society and history!

What was it that the philosophers of the French Revolution hoped to effect? Destruction of the remains of the past, destruction of the present, for the purpose of fabricating a new society, with a new government, founded on the unchanging principles of reason. They failed to perceive that the total destruction of the past and present would likewise entail the destruction of the future, which cannot exist without the past, and would throw society back into barbarism. On this point they were even less modern than Machiavelli, who at least had no faith in these philosophical modes of government, and gave no credence to the

empty dream of finding an ideal man beyond the limits of society.

The idea of the historic evolution of man and society, of which the first gleam is seen in the "*Scienza Nuova*" of G. B. Vico, and which remained at that time the solitary thought of a single philosopher, only forced its way into science and the general culture of the world, after the philosophic revolution initiated by Kant. As Bryce justly remarks in his work on "*The Holy Roman Empire*": "There is nothing more modern than the critical spirit which dwells upon the difference between the minds of men in one age and in another; which endeavours to make each age its own interpreter, and judge what it did or produced by a relative standard."¹ And this remark, although applied by the author to the Middle Ages, may with equal force be applied to the Renaissance.

It has been proved with sufficient clearness that the conception of an absolute and permanent equality among men, together with the conception of a natural state, was first formulated in the *jus gentium* of the Romans and in their right of nature, according to which *omnes homines natura æquales sunt*. Little by little this conception made its way into political science; but its progress was extremely slow. Beginning in the Middle Ages with the study of the Roman Law, it shared the progress of the latter in the Renaissance, reached completion in the eighteenth century, and attained victory with the French Revolution that openly proclaimed the equality of mankind.² That there was some kinship in this respect between the Revolution and our Italian Communes is proved by the laws of the Communes. For these are sometimes expressed in a tone and with a declaration of general principles, reminding us of the edicts of the Convention; as, for instance, in the law by which the Florentines abolished slavery in 1289, and in the others which afterwards, when collected together, constituted the "*Ordinances of Justice*." Even in the language of the historians we may find further evidence of this resemblance; and one of the more convincing is to be found in the words attributed by Machiavelli to a man of the people, who, during the Revolt of the Ciompi (1378), tried to rouse the populace against the nobility. "Nor must you let yourselves be cowed," said he, "by that nobility of blood of which they make

¹ Bryce, "*The Holy Roman Empire*." London, Macmillan, 1866, ch. xv. p. 287.

² See the standard work by Sir Henry Main: "*Ancient Law*," ch. iii. and iv. London, Murray, 1878, seventh edition.

boast to us ; for all men, having had the same beginning, are of equally ancient birth, and nature has made them all in the same fashion. Were we all stripped naked you would find us alike ; dress us in their clothes and they in ours, without doubt we should seem noble and they mean, forasmuch as it is only poverty and riches that makes us unequal." *

But whatever the history of this conception of the absolute and immutable equality of man, it is certain that Machiavelli had the utmost faith in it, and that it had several noteworthy effects on his mode of thought. And the first of its effects was to render it impossible for him to establish a relative standard for the various judgment of political actions and conduct, according to the variation of the times, social conditions and morality of nations. To him, all that had been opportune, necessary and useful at one time, became logically justified for ever. Besides, if unable to discover a relative criterion of morals for the judgment of different epochs, neither could he discover it when, in one and the same society, he beheld the same men obeying very diverse laws of conduct in public and private life. Certainly it was not possible for him to suppress this diversity ; for, in fact, one of his principal merits was that of having perceived and studied it, without averting his glance from conscientious scruples. But although he discerned this difference, it was not possible for him to discover any true relation between the two orders of facts, so as to trace them back to common principles, only varying in their application. Unable to demolish Christian morality, which asserted itself as absolute, immutable, eternal, and was in substantial agreement even with ancient philosophy, he was forced either to renounce the real study of facts, or to consider the world of politics as entirely independent and apart from the world of private and Christian morality, and regulated by entirely different laws.

What, in fact, was the end attained by the political writers of the Middle Ages, the end of which they would never lose sight ? Their lengthy dissertations on the goodness, virtue, and piety of the ruling classes were read with avidity by men who nevertheless continued to rend each other to pieces, under the influence of the most ferocious passions.² It was a science that, having taken no

* Machiavelli, "Storie," in the "Opere," vol. i. p. 166.

² "He who begins to read the history of the Middle Ages is alternately amused and provoked by the seeming absurdities that meet him at every step. He finds writers proclaiming, amidst universal assent, magnificent theories which no one

account of reality, never exercised the slightest influence over it. And certainly, whatever effects it might have hoped to obtain, it could have none in the guidance of public life, but rather in persuading men to renounce it altogether in order to retire to the cloister. Such could not be the aim of Machiavelli, who rather sought to discover by study of society, the art of government and the art of leading men to a practical and definite end.

Nevertheless, to him this could not be a necessary and pre-established end; for, in his eyes, society had no necessary scope resultant from the laws of human nature. On the contrary, it depended, as we have already seen, solely on the will of the politician and the legislator, whose actions likewise became arbitrary. Given an end, of whatever nature, science should be able to find the means to attain it. When the legislator was a good man, and his object the greatness of his country, he was glorious; if, instead, his aim was the ruin of his country and its liberties, he was infamous. In either case science would have been of equal assistance to him; it mattered not whether that science were good or bad, but merely whether it were true or false, accordingly as it did or did not teach the road to success. And at all events, it was always the end that justified or condemned, never the means required for reaching that end. To condemn an action that, although apparently iniquitous or cruel had been found necessary for the safety of the country, or security of the State, implied an attempt to judge political conduct by the standards of private life, and to render impossible any science of statecraft that was not based upon the imagination. His premises once established, the nature of his mind inexorably urged him to the logical consequence; and in the belief that he was revealing new and useful truths to the world he did not shrink from the evil reputation conferred upon him by those who failed to comprehend his motives.

But for the attainment of his end, it was requisite for him to find some rational elements in history and society without which

attempts to carry out." The divergence between the theory and practice of life has always been very great, observes the same writer, but "in the Middle Ages, this perpetual opposition of theory and practice was peculiarly abrupt. Men's impulses were more violent, and their conduct more reckless than is often witnessed in modern society; while the absence of a criticizing and measuring spirit made them surrender their minds more unreservedly than they would now do, to a complete and imposing theory" (Bryce, "The Holy Roman Empire," pp. 145, 146).

they could not be subjects of scientific inquiry. Thus, by means of the historic method he was led to discover the logical connection of events, but without ever directing his attention to any *à priori* philosophical theory of the human mind, and almost without cognizance of any theory of the kind. Even when this connection became clear to him, and he could trace throughout history and society something in the nature of an occult design, being unable to account for all this in the manner of the theologians by declaring God to be its sole author ; having no conception of impersonal forces and their regulating laws ; nor able to trace back the work of social development to the human mind as to its primary source, he referred all things to the legislator in whom all things were personified. The legislator thus became, as it were, the creator and arbiter of society, subject to no guidance from the popular conscience, nor under any obligation to obey it ; having no part with it, nor being bound to it in any way. Hence political action appeared to him as independent even of the conscience of him who performed it : almost as a natural phenomenon, of which men might tranquilly investigate the cause, force and effect. How, indeed, could he judge it according to the rules of a social conscience whose existence he did not recognize, nor by the rules of private conscience, when he placed the legislator above the law ? The legislator might be a good man, and yet, precisely by excess of goodness, pursue a polity fatal to society ; he might be a villain, and yet succeed in saving society. Thus political deeds lost the value of human actions, they almost seemed deprived of any human or personal element, and the legislator who performed them seemed to repeat with Hamlet : " 'Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all ! " He therefore tried to stifle the inconvenient voice, abandoned all half-measures, and without farther hesitation marched inexorably towards his aim.

But it is precisely this that terrifies us. On hearing the calm enumeration of the cases in which a statesman *ought* to lie, deceive, and betray, we are seized by a violent and irresistible revulsion of feeling, forcing us to declare that treason and immorality may destroy States, but cannot erect them. Nor can we in any way renounce this conviction ; and it is easier for us to admit that Machiavelli was a monster. Only, however persistent this feeling, and however justifiable, it certainly does not assist us to a verdict on the doctrines of Machiavelli, and still less does it help us to discover the source of his errors, so as to be able to avoid

them, after measuring their extent and their consequences. And even less can this feeling serve for a standard, since it too frequently leads us astray. For it continually urges us to exaggeration, not only because the public and private morality of our own times is far higher than that of Machiavelli's day ; but because there is a barrier of misapprehension between him and his modern readers that has to be overcome before we can judge him with impartiality. These misapprehensions, augmented by the extravagant language he so frequently adopts, arise from our confronting his individual errors, and those of his time, with our own, which are of a totally different nature. Once persuaded that laws, institutions, society, and governments are the growth of the human mind ; that they progress, decline, and become corrupt simultaneously with it ; we cannot admit the possibility of the accomplishment of social morality by means of individual immorality, nor that what is evil in one sphere of action can be converted into good in another, when our conscience is always one and the same. We may admit that Pagan morality was different from Christian, mediæval morality from our own ; for it is practically recognized that human nature was different in those times. It is less easy for us to allow that among the same people, and at the same time, moral conduct might and ought to be subject to different rules in different spheres of human activity, or that the same actions might have a different value. Falsehood and deceit are always immoral, and must and always will be condemned by us. Yet in practice we are driven to contradictions. In war it is still allowable to delude our enemies in order to get the better of them ; we recompense the deserter from the enemy, who betrays his country, and we can even praise a successful ambush. In a duel this would be murder ; but a feint that throws our adversary off his guard, and exposes him to easier destruction, is admissible according to the laws of honour, whereas, in ordinary life, all falsehood is rigorously excluded from the conduct of an honest man. In the same way we daily repeat that genuine diplomacy, genuine politics always loyally adhere to the truth, and are subject to the same rules as our private actions ; that indeed it is precisely on this account we bear so harshly upon Machiavelli. But let us take notice whether that which we say and write is really in unison with that which we *do*, for his concern was with actions, not with ideas and words.

When Machiavelli asserts that the Statesman should play the fox as well as the lion, our horror is boundless. But

when beneath our own eyes a powerful nation is erected chiefly by the work of a great Statesman, who knows precisely how to play the fox and the lion, how to crush the foe, and, when necessary, deceive him ; who makes use of all men, and then throws them aside like worn-out tools the instant they cease to serve his ends ; what is the verdict pronounced upon him by the public conscience of Europe ? Does it regard the means or the end ? Does it pronounce him immoral, or does it not rather style him a great politician, when everything he has done was solely for the advantage of his country ? It is related of the greatest of our own statesmen that at the time when he was most zealously and efficiently labouring for the redemption of our country, he was heard to earnestly exclaim : I am sometimes compelled to ask myself, whether I am still an honest man, or am becoming a scoundrel ? This would prove nothing against the morality of his character, but would very clearly prove that the conflict to which we have alluded, is going on even at present and to the extent of assuming tragic proportions in the honest conscience of the patriot who sacrifices everything to his country. "Vice n'est ce pas," remarked Montaigne, exactly in allusion to the difficulties of this kind by which the Statesman is often confronted, "car il a quitté sa raison à une plus universelle et puissante raison."¹

And what, then, can be his true justification, if not the end he has had in view, the result that he has accomplished ? The disgust excited in us by the repetition of the phrase :—the end justifies the means,—partly comes from this being the sinister maxim of the Jesuits. But we must not forget that the Jesuits sanctioned the use of every means to accomplish their end of subjecting the State to the Church, the Church to the Company, and that such end was in no way justified, nor justifiable. We may, of course, reject the maxim, since it is certain that no good is born of evil, and that the means is not independent of the end it is intended to

¹ "Le prince, quand une urgent circonstance et quelque impetueux et inopiné accident du besoing de son estat luy faiet gauchir sa parole et sa foy ou aultrement le iecte hors de son debvoir ordinaire, doit attribuer cette necessité à un coup de la verge divine : vice n'est ce pas, car il a quitté sa raison à une plus universelle et puissante raison ; mais certes c'est malheur : de manière qu' à quelqu' un qui me demandoit : Quel remède ?—Nul remède, feis ie, s'il feust véritablement gehenné (*tourmenté*) entre ces deux extrêmes, *sed videat ne quærat laticbra periurio*. Il falloir le faire ; mais s'il le fait sans regret, s'il ne luy greva de le faire, c'est signe que sa conscience est en mauvais termes" (Montaigne, "Essais," vol. iv. bk. iii. ch. i. pp. 351, 352. Paris, Tardieu-Denesle, 1828, p. 16).

effect ; to a certain extent, indeed, the one always shares the nature of the other. Nevertheless, we must also admit that the same action has a very different value in the different ranges of social activity, precisely on account of the different ends the latter have in view, and of the different effect the former produces. In private life, together with our own welfare, we have also to promote that of our neighbour ; in public life all private interests must be subordinated, and when necessary, sacrificed, to the general welfare. Therefore, in public life, the individual is of less value than in private.

Besides, the existence of a real and substantial difference is in general terms admitted by all, and is keenly brought home to every one passing suddenly from private into public life. Here the first impression received by him is that of the existence of a moral logic of an entirely novel kind, inasmuch as it differs from, and sometimes, at least apparently, contradicts that which he had hitherto known and practised. Where Machiavelli blundered was in regarding the one as altogether independent of the other, and in discovering no relation between them. We, on the contrary, not only perceive this relation, but also see that both depend from the same principles ; that they have a common starting-point and tend to a common end. Nevertheless this relation is still somewhat confused in our minds ; we have not yet been able to define it scientifically, and, even to the present day, this remains one of the chief obstacles to the foundation of a genuine science of practical politics.² Our very imperfect and uncertain knowledge of a relation of which no doubt can be entertained, urges us to dispose of the difficulty by too readily granting the possibility of suppressing all real difference between public and private morality, by means of proclaiming their identity. This is where we blunder. Thus, on the one hand, we find ourselves in the midst of prejudices and errors opposed to those of Machiavelli, and in a moral world very different from his ; while, on the other,

² In order to perceive how great is still the uncertainty of modern science on this question, it is enough to read any treatise upon politics. We may quote that of Doctor Holtzendorff, "*Die Principien der Politik*," Berlin, 1869, and especially pp. 151 and fol. of the chapter entitled : "*Das Verhältniss der Moral zur Politik*." The author, as usual, attacks Machiavelli for his immorality ; but admits, nevertheless, that political morality is different from private ; he insists on their relation, on their community of principles, and combats all immorality in politics. But, then, at p. 175, we meet with several "*Streitfragen*," in which the contradiction that is so difficult to explain again comes to the surface.

we have a science of politics that is not yet solidly established, and so far having neither incontrovertible canons, nor an incontrovertible standard. Hence all will see the enormous difficulties to be encountered when trying to arrive at an accurate judgment of Machiavelli in the time when he was laying the first foundations of a science that has made so little progress since his day. Hence, also, the lengthy train of interpreters, admirers, and detractors, never coming to an understanding of the real meaning, the recondite and mysterious aims of this man, who always clearly expressed all that he intended to say. Never, in short, was there a less Machiavellian man than Machiavelli; and we might with greater justice accuse him of cynicism, than of filling his writings with premeditated reticences or hidden intentions.

For if we place him precisely in his own age, and follow him attentively and without prejudice, we perceive that, on entering the path that we so often find beset with danger and difficulty, he was making a daring and gigantic effort at the investigation of the true reality of things, by resolutely shaking himself loose from the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages had subordinated the State to the Church by confounding them with each other, just as they had confounded public and private rights; had subordinated politics to religion by means of moral doctrine. Supreme power and public offices had assumed a feudal shape, and almost the shape of private property, thus causing an inextricable confusion both in the practice and the theory of mankind.¹ Therefore when we find Machiavelli the first to regard the phenomena of society and history as natural phenomena; when we find him studying their laws and connection, examining the possible effect upon society of the labours of the Statesman without concerning himself with individual judgments or prejudices, with religious or

¹ We may quote a few brief and lucid observations of Dr. Bluntschli on this question: "Über den Unterschied der mittelalterlicher und der modernen Staatsidee. Ein wissenschaftlicher Vortrag." "Indem das Mittelalter von Gott aus den Staat betrachtete, konfundirte, es noch vielfache Politik und Religion, Staat und Kirche (p. 10) . . . Die heutigen Streitigkeiten zwischen dem Staat und der Kirche sind daher unbedeutend im Vergleich mit denen des Mittelalters (p. 15). Das Mittelalter vermengte ferner öffentliches und Privatrecht: widerum eine natürliche Folge seines Gedankenganges . . . Daher vermischten sich die beiderlei Rechte in den Verstellungen und in den Institutionen. Daher nahm das Mittelalter keinen Anstoss daran, dass alle öffentlichen Aemter mit dem Grundbesitz verbunden wurden und erblich von Vater auf Sohn überging wie diese" (pp. 16, 17).

Now all this is exactly what Machiavelli aimed at destroying in order to arrive at the modern State, of which he was the first to form a scientific conception.

moral condemnations, then suddenly, and almost forgetful of our scruples, we seem to recognize the flash of genius, to be witnesses, as in fact we are, of the creation of political science. We are forced to admit that the path he so daringly trod in the sixteenth century, is even now, saving its errors, the only one leading to practical results in that science. So long as, while recognizing the immutable and general constancy of moral principles, we refuse similar recognition of the independent and objective value of political actions, and do not succeed in determining its profound diversity from private action, a practical science of politics will remain an impossibility.

Nor is this all. Strange as it may appear, in order to find a safe guide and foundation for political integrity, it is necessary to make a rational return to the method and doctrines of Machiavelli. If we are content to continually repeat that there is but one moral code, that public business must be conducted by the same rules as private affairs, and that true policy and true diplomacy consist in loyal adherence to truth, what will be the consequences, when practice shows us that by faithful observance of these maxims we are condemned to isolation and impotence? We shall then be forced either to withdraw, or, after seeing our first exaggerated scruples contradicted and set at naught by the actual force of things, compelled to begin the series of compromises, middle-terms, and makeshifts, which are nothing but empty shams serving to mask essential differences by a purely conventional and deceptive uniformity. Now it is certain that amid these fictions, all true and genuine standards of political honesty or dishonesty, loyalty or disloyalty, are speedily lost sight of. There is no longer any fixed rule, everything seems admissible, so long as it can be arrayed in fitting form and semblance; and frequently the very men who were most scrupulous at the outset suddenly become the most sceptical, and confuse the substance of things with the commonest tricks of politics, which indeed seem solely composed of similar tricks. And in this labyrinth of subtle deceit, bad men are far more successful than good and loyal citizens, who, confident in the rectitude of their intentions, are less apt at assuming disguise, and unaware of the necessity for it. So it often happens that these are the men who are deemed dishonest, and that only those pass for honest men who best know how to wear a mask, and under false appearances, look to nothing but personal aims.

Thus the door is opened to political corruption, a far more

pressing danger in our own than in past times, and a danger that will continue to increase. Formerly, in fact, governments were in the hands of a limited number of individuals, who, not only in aristocratic countries such as England, but even in almost all the republics of the ancient or Middle Ages, constituted a privileged class. The interests of this class became identical with those of the State, and traditions gradually arose supplying the place of principles. Now that democracy invades everything, all men may sooner or later attain to a share in the government. It continually happens that individuals are transported of a sudden from private to public life, and without any established traditions of hereditary political training, wherefore, unless there be sound principles furnishing settled rules for the safeguard of State interests in the midst of continual change, political corruption will become the scourge of our democratic governments, and endanger their existence. For although there be a real difference between political and private morality, certainly this does not imply that there is no difference between moral and immoral policy, nor that the latter is less destructive to State and nation, than private immorality to the individual and the family.

Nevertheless, all this should not prevent us from recognizing the immense progress we have made, and the distance that divides us from Machiavelli. In our conception, the Statesman must be one with the society that he rules, the which society has a personality and a conscience in relation with the individual conscience from which it is derived, and with which therefore it cannot be in open contradiction. Society submits to certain special laws of its own, and has definite aims and purposes, chief of which is the moral improvement of mankind. Whenever the politician and the legislator deviate from this purpose, they violate the most sacred laws of nature and history. It was another of Machiavelli's errors to regard only the grandeur and power of the State, without any consideration for the individual; almost as though man were made for the State instead of the State for man. Yet a political action, whatever its independent value, is nevertheless the action of a man, and therefore cannot be void of every personal and individual element. If I succour the poor, without my left hand knowing that which my right doeth, my action may certainly be good and yet of no political value; if instead, without being stirred by Christian charity, but only in the accomplishment of an official duty, I make a public donation to the poor and wish it to be

known to all men, my action may be politically good and yet have no farther moral value. Nevertheless, it would be exceeding the bounds of truth to assert that the existence of a feeling of Christian charity can add nothing to the political action that is only valuable by its exterior results, quite irrespective of its intrinsic worth. Carried away by his irrepressible imagination, Machiavelli was often led into wild exaggeration when trying to distinguish between these two categories of facts. When he reaches the point of asserting that in politics the mere semblance of good is useful, whereas goodness of intention is sometimes injurious to the Statesman, then truth thus exaggerated is converted into falsehood. If the aim of all politics should be, as he eloquently affirms, the national greatness, to which all private interest must be sacrificed, then no one can deny that only the good and generous soul can be truly devoted to that aim, and really competent to promote it.

Yet in order to prove that personal goodness and political capacity are different things, Machiavelli takes particular delight in showing how great may be sometimes the political utility of a thoroughly bad man; and not having, nor indeed in his day being able to conceive, any clear idea of the civil and moral progress of human society, he thought that what was justifiable on some one occasion must always be justified. He discerned no substantial difference between the means used by some savage chieftain for the establishment of social order and those to be employed by the prince of an already advanced State. If to this day history can praise the character of William the Conqueror, who put out his prisoners' eyes, and had their hands and feet cut off, without ever yielding to any touch of pity,¹ it might well be difficult for Machiavelli to recognize that in different times such means could only be employed by a monster, and would cause the immediate overthrow of him who should resort to them. This was exactly because he failed to see, as we see, that there are bonds of connection between the public and private conscience, and that men are not always the same, but continually changing. Similarly, also,

¹ "The full grandeur of his indomitable will, his large and patient statesmanship, the loftiness of aim which lifts him out of his age had still to be disclosed. But there never was a moment from his boyhood when he was not among the greatest of men. . . . His vengeance had no touch of human pity. William tore out the eyes of the prisoners he had taken, cut off their hands and feet, and flung them into the town. At the close of his greatest victory he refused Harold's body a grave" (J. R. Green, "A Short History of the English People." London, Macmillan, 1878, at pp. 71, 72).

when admiring the deeds of Cæsar Borgia, almost as though they were a work of art, he failed to perceive that the Duke had over-shot the mark, and scandalized even that most scandalous age, so that sooner or later his enterprizes were doomed to ruin, and both he and his father, their shrewdness, talent, and luck notwithstanding, had built upon sand through too outrageously trampling on the human conscience. And all this is made still more intolerable to us by the singular language that, as we have noted, Machiavelli so frequently employed. Words commonly used in praise of the noblest actions of private life are frequently devoted by him to the eulogy of actions that would be deemed iniquitous in private life, whenever, according to his creed, they might be useful or necessary in public life. He does this the better to emphasize the difference between the one and the other life, and not only without scruple or hesitation, but with positive enthusiasm, especially when it is a question of actions performed in defence of the country. But no explanation can ever reconcile our ears to the sound of *honourable frauds*, *generous cruelties*, and *glorious wickednesses*. Yet, urged on by an inexorable logic, spurred by an irresistible desire for the discovery of general laws and rules, convinced that he was tracing an unknown road, and founding upon a solid basis a new science of practical utility to mankind, and with his usual leaning to absolute extremes, he drew the consequences of his premises without shrinking from anything or caring for what might be said of him.

We have often full right to blame him for this ; but our just censure should not blind us to the reality of things, nor to the difficulty of the problem that he first dared to attack, and that we have not yet solved. When to this day Christian churches contain pictures of Judith exhibiting the head of Holofernes to an exultant populace, a Judith almost classed among the Saints ; when we try to rouse the admiration of our schoolboys for Horace, the murderer of his own sister, do we ever think of the terms we should apply to these deeds were we to judge them on the same principles by which we have so often condemned Machiavelli ? These deeds are exactly of the order that he styled *glorious crimes*. Undoubtedly, had the times been less corrupt, the phenomenon of Machiavellism would have taken another form ; and had Machiavelli owned a purer and more ideal mind, recoiling from all cynicism, and an intenser love of virtue, he, too, would have adopted a different tone, and, without perceiving that which in those days it was impossible for him to perceive, would have

sometimes given vent to the revolt and suffering of his own conscience. Nothing is less rational than to omit to take account of the inevitable errors of an age, and their necessary consequences; nothing is more unjust than the resolve to regard such errors as the crimes of the individual, and then pretend to explain all things by the corruption of the individual and his times. Consequently, Mohl was quite right to say that if Machiavelli had sinned, he had been still more sinned against.¹ Posterity must yet render justice to him who, although certainly far from blameless, dared to attempt the solution of one of the most tremendous problems of moral science, and who, inspired by patriotism, love of truth and liberty, and real ardour for the public good, did not shrink from exposing his name to the contumely of many after generations.

To set Machiavelli completely in his own time, and the better to comprehend him, nothing can be more useful than to examine him side by side with Guicciardini. And this has now been made easier by the publication of the latter's "Considerations" on the former's "Discourses." Guicciardini certainly possessed a greater aptitude for command, a wider knowledge of men and affairs, especially of state affairs, of which he had enjoyed a far more extended experience. Also as we have already seen, without either genuine political convictions or great ideal needs, and solely concerned with making his way in the world, he was always an exact and practical observer, never led astray by fanciful speculations. Beside Machiavelli, he seems the genius of common sense, who, full of self-confidence, smilingly regards the too audacious flights, too daring creations of the genius of conjecture, and with much competency and prudence notes the latter's every inexactitude and blames his hasty and dangerous steps, but never entirely comprehends the force and majesty of his aims. Machiavelli, on his side, never listens to the counsels of prudence, for he is only satisfied when climbing by new and unexplored tracks, where he sometimes meets with ugly falls, but never loses the energy needed for resuming his ascent.

Guicciardini's opening words show the temper of his mind. Machiavelli, in treating of the origin of cities, and faithful to his maxim of men being evil by nature and made good by necessity, remarks that when cities are in barren places, their inhabitants become laborious and energetic, but that when on the contrary

¹ "Machiavelli hat gesündigt, aber noch mehr ist gegen ihn gesündigt worden" (Mohl, *cit. op.*, p. 541).

they are in fertile spots, their citizens abandon themselves to sloth, unless the over benignity of nature is counteracted by rigorous laws and institutions. A sterile soil, however, affords no facility for conquests. On this account the Romans founded their city in a fertile spot which supplied them with means and opportunity for conquest, while they remedied the rest by most severe enactments to fit the people for war, and which Machiavelli then proceeds to enumerate. At this point Guicciardini, who although a great admirer of the military capacity of the Romans had less admiration for their government and policy, seems to have suddenly lost patience. Rome, he remarks, was situated in a fertile spot, but without outlying territory, and surrounded by warlike tribes, hence it was obliged to extend its dominion by force of arms and treaties. And this is what always follows, "if not in a city desirous of living *after a philosophical method*, at all events in those wishing to be governed in the usual way of the world, as it is necessary to be."¹

Then, proceeding to examine what the "Discourses" have to say of various forms of government, he approves of the manner in which they are expounded according to the ideas of Polybius. But, on reaching, in the ninth chapter, the decisive point where it is stated that the founder of a republic should stand alone, and that for this reason Romulus did well to kill his brother, what is the attitude assumed by Guicciardini with regard to Machiavelli? "Doubtless one alone can establish order better than many together, and doubtless in an anarchical city he deserves praise, who, being otherwise unable to establish order, succeeds in establishing it by violence and fraud and extraordinary measures." "But let us pray God that there be no necessity for obtaining order in this fashion, inasmuch as men are fallible, and he who establishes order may easily be seized with the desire to become a tyrant. And as regards the life of Romulus, we should carefully consider it, for it seems that he was put to death by the Senate exactly because he sought to grasp too much power in his own hands. Let us carefully consider it."² Then where, in the

¹ Guicciardini, "Opere Inedite," vol. i. : "Considerazioni intorno ai Discorsi del Machiavelli sulla prima Deca di Tito Livio." These "Considerazioni" treat of the twenty-eight chapters of the first book of the "Discorsi," of the proem and seven chapters of the second book, and finally of three chapters of the third book. See the "Considerazioni" on chap. i. of bk. i. of the "Discorsi."

² "Considerazione" on chap. ix. of bk. i. of the "Discorsi."

pursuance of his discourse, Machiavelli so eloquently describes the magnanimity of the true legislator, who, on the completion of his task, proves his disinterestedness and loftiness of aim by refraining from leaving the State to his heirs, and entrusting it to the care of the people to ensure the duration of its liberty and strength, Guicciardini coldly remarks, that these ideas are "easier to describe in books and in the imagination of mankind, than to carry into practical effect."¹ Therefore, without any discussion, he grants Machiavelli's starting-point, and even goes so far as to allow that fraud, violence, and deceit may be praiseworthy in the case in question. But while recognizing the fact, as it was then practically recognized by all, he refuses to frame any theory upon, or deduce any consequence from it, and seeks rather to attenuate and temper it by moderation of tone and in accordance with the suggestions of common sense. He will not admit the possibility of that grand generosity of the true legislator, in which Machiavelli so implicitly believes; and yet charges Machiavelli, at the same time, with having too low an opinion of mankind.

In fact, as we have seen, Machiavelli declares that by nature men would be very wicked, did not the laws curb them and constrain them to be good. And, he even adds, that were they really good no laws would be required. According to our ideas, laws being made by men, and the outcome of their modes of thought and feeling, it clearly results that, were there no germ of goodness in men, we could have neither good laws nor the virtues derived from them. But Guicciardini, who neither held our ideas nor accepted those of Machiavelli, contents himself with simply remarking that the Secretary is too absolute in his assertions, since men are disposed to goodness and only stray from it through motives of personal interest. Whoever, he says, should have a natural preference for evil would be a monster. Laws, therefore, should be so conceived as to restrain him who may seek to do evil, but should also hold out rewards for the encouragement of goodness.²

But even Machiavelli had said, and with great eloquence, that whoever, on weighing good against evil, should prefer evil, could not be of human birth. Nevertheless, on studying society, he found that private interest was continually opposed to public interest, and that the latter could never gain the victory without

¹ "Considerazione" on chap. x. of bk. i. of the "Discorsi."

² Ibid. on chap. iii. of bk. i. of the "Discorsi."

the aid of law and violence ; and as he chiefly desired to assure this victory, and beheld in it the source of all civil virtues, so therefore he considered them to be derived from law and violence. Guicciardini, on the other hand, being both in theory and practice far more tolerant towards private and personal interests, remedied everything by establishing the balance of these interests and conceived the government and the State to constitute that balance, whereas Machiavelli regarded government and State as a superior and stronger unity justified in maintaining itself by the overthrow of all private resistance. Besides, as he thought government to be personified in the legislator, who imposed it on society, so he looked upon every social impulse as an impulse from without ; and thus even virtue itself was made compulsory on the citizens by law. Guicciardini saw nothing, or at least examined nothing, but unconnected sentences and observations, and therefore contented himself with blaming Machiavelli's exaggerations, and tempering and attenuating his excesses of language, leaving aside all questions he deemed too general and consequently idle and theoretical.

In the "Discourses" it is frequently repeated, that there is no healthier nor more useful means of assuring liberty than that of slaying the sons of Brutus. Guicciardini, treating of this subject, says : "It is very difficult to train to liberty a people unacquainted with it. In such cases the best plan is to establish a temperate government, and after speedy chastisement of its opponents, leave every one else to live in peace. Although, however, it may often be necessary to shed blood, the new government ought not to desire that Brutus should have sons in order to increase its reputation by putting them to death ; it were far better for Brutus to have no sons. But when it is a question of a prince held in detestation by a people enamoured of liberty, then there is no remedy save bloodshed. And it is childish to hold with Machiavelli that Clearchus murdered the chieftains to give satisfaction to the people that was hostile to him ; we may rather believe that the chieftains, too, were his enemies, and that he therefore slaughtered them under false pretences. The sole remedy in these cases is to win adherents with sufficient power to subdue the people, or else to crush and annihilate it, so as to render it incapable of action, and people the State with fresh inhabitants unaccustomed to liberty."¹ And after these words,

¹ "Considerazione" on chap. xvi. of bk. i. of the "Discorsi."

which while attacking Machiavelli, yet make large concessions to his ideas, Guicciardini immediately tries to tone down his own too absolute expression of opinion. "It is, however, necessary that the prince should have the courage to resort to extraordinary measures whenever they may be required; but he should also have the wisdom to neglect no opportunity of establishing affairs with humanity and benevolence, never accepting as an absolute rule the method prescribed by the writer who always finds great delight in extraordinary and violent remedies."¹

He pursues the same mode of criticism where Machiavelli asserts that whenever it is a question of rising from a humble position to lofty estate, force alone is not sufficient, and must be accompanied by fraud. He draws the following distinction: "If it be a question of dissimulation and cunning, it may be true that force alone, very seldom, though I will not say never—that being too strong a term—suffices to raise men from low to lofty estate. But if downright deception and violation of faith be intended, then there have been many who have won kingdoms without fraud, like Alexander the Great, and Cæsar, who proclaimed his ambitious intent. It may also be disputed whether fraud is always a sure means of attaining greatness, because, although grand blows may be struck by deceit, yet the reputation of being a deceiver will afterwards prevent you from accomplishing your purpose."² But the principal theme of the "Discourses" was, that, in politics, deceit is frequently a necessary means for the attainment even of a worthy end, and the conclusion drawn is, that it may therefore be a duty to employ deceit. Guicciardini is evidently of the same opinion, but considers the maxim so excessively daring that he will neither unreservedly admit, nor even discuss it in detail. So he confines himself to the more practical question of examining when fraud is or is not successful in reaching a given end.

We have had occasion to notice that Machiavelli makes, in his "Discourses," several accurate and profound remarks on the history of parties in Rome and Florence, and draws the conclusion that party strife was ruinous in Florence, because the victory of the people implied the destruction of nobles; but that party warfare had been advantageous in Rome, because there the people had confined itself to fighting for its just rights, and on obtaining the victory, shared the government with the patricians. These reflec-

¹ "Considerazione" on chap. xxvi. of bk. i. of the "Discorsi."

² Ibid. on chap. xiii. of bk. ii. of the "Discorsi."

tions are so just that they form the basis and foundation of his History of Florence, and help to constitute the originality of that work. But Guicciardini, in his examination of them, as usual concentrates his attention on the too absolute manner in which they are asserted, and then says : " It certainly was not strife that made Rome powerful ; on the contrary, it would have been far better had the patricians at once accorded the people a share in the government. To commend disunion is like commending the illness of a sick man for the sake of the good remedies afterwards administered to him.¹ Appius Claudius was not overthrown because he had joined with the patricians against the people when he should have done the contrary, nor for the other reason adduced by Machiavelli ; he fell because he tried to extinguish the Republic at a time when Rome had good laws, devout customs, and an ardent love of liberty. Manlius Capitolinus took the popular side in order to overcome the patricians, and likewise fell ; Sulla leant upon the patricians ; the same was done in Florence by the Duke of Athens, who then forfeited their favour by his own fault. History is full of varied examples, and each example has good reasons of its own ; but these events cannot supply us with any fixed rule, since we must draw our conclusions from the temper of the city and the state of things, the which state varies according to the conditions of the times, and other casual circumstances.²

But the point upon which Guicciardini abandons his usual moderation in favour of a violent, or at least a very decided tone, is that where he speaks of the people which he despised and almost hated, and which Machiavelli loved, admired, and extolled. " I do not rightly understand," he says, " the meaning of the assertion, that the people should be entrusted with the guardianship of liberty. If it is intended to speak of those entitled to a share in the government, such share appertains, especially in mixed governments, as, for instance, of Rome, no less to the people than to the nobles, since the people of Rome frequently preserved the common country and the common liberty. But were it a question of making choice between a government entirely composed of patricians or entirely of plebeians, I should not stay to discuss whether the former were really better fitted to preserve, the latter to conquer ; but there would be no hesitation in my choice, inasmuch

¹ " Considerazione " on chap. iv. of bk. i. of the " Discorsi."

² Ibid. on chap. xl. of bk. i. of the " Discorsi."

as the populace is ignorant, and unfitted for either office."¹ "Where there is a multitude there is confusion, and in so great a discord of brains, with all their various judgments, various thoughts and various aims, there can be neither reasonable discussion, well founded resolve, nor decided action; . . . wherefore, and not without reason, the multitude has been likened to the waves of the sea, which, according to the blowing of the winds, run now this way and now that, without any rule." Machiavelli, on the contrary, had said that, with some reason, the voice of the people had been likened to the voice of a god. But in Guicciardini's opinion the people was a sink of ignorance, and popular governments were always ignorant. And although the Roman Republic was wise, that was because it had always been governed by the few, not by the many. Neither did it avail, he said, to recall the personal vices of princes, since the point now in question was their capacity for government, and a man of many vices might yet have great capacity as a ruler.² But this was exactly what was asserted by Machiavelli, who did not concern himself with the private qualities of princes, or at least only in so far as these were beneficial or harmful to the State. Certain points of resemblance notwithstanding, the two great Florentine politicians were so different in their tastes and intellectual tendencies, as to often end in misunderstanding each other. With regard to ancient Rome, Guicciardini thought Machiavelli's admiration exaggerated, and refused to accept as a model a State in which he found nothing to admire save its military organization.³ But even upon military questions they were unable to agree. Neither of the two was a soldier by profession; but Guicciardini had enjoyed a much wider experience of warfare, having been Commissary in larger armies than that against Pisa, and an eye-witness of conflicts of far greater importance. Nevertheless his contempt for speculative theories prevented him from having any of the original ideas of Machiavelli, either on the art of war in general or the method of organizing militia forces in particular. His contemporary, on the contrary, with a much narrower experience had investigated things far more closely. Guicciardini, therefore, again tried to confound the author of the "Discourses" by pointing out all the exaggerations which had escaped him, and frequently proved

¹ "Considerazione" on chap. v. of bk. i. of the "Discorsi."

² Ibid. on chap. lviii. of bk. i. of the "Discorsi."

³ Ibid. on chap. xlix. of bk. i. of the "Discorsi."

him at fault ; as, for instance, where he blames Machiavelli for considering firearms and fortresses of light value, for the mere sake of imitating and perpetually citing the example of the Romans.

✓ "We must not," he rightly says, "laud antiquity to the point of depreciating all modern institutions that were not in existence in the days of the Romans, for experience has led to the discovery of many things unthought of by the ancients, and which have become necessary now that matters are on a different footing. And it is but too evident that fortresses may sometimes be necessary. The argument alleged against them (by Machiavelli), namely, that they encourage bad princes to persevere in evil, is very frivolous, since in that case we ought to have neither defences, arms, nor soldiers. We should not avoid useful things from the dread lest security should encourage us to evil. Ought we then to blame medicine, because faith in it might render us less cautious in preserving our health?"¹ He was right upon this point, for certainly Machiavelli indulged in great exaggeration in his "Discourses," so much so, that in other writings he rather tried to modify his theories, and afterwards became one of the most active promoters of the fortification of Florence. But Guicciardini even failed to seize his meaning where he maintained, and with much justice, that new States should rely on the strength of the people and their armed citizens, and not upon fortresses, as the petty Italian tyrants had done and were still doing, almost always to their own destruction. He failed to understand him, because he would never listen to any praise of the people, and always insisted that, "considering how often the people, even when well treated, have shown so little reason, and how much they hanker after new things, it is necessary to depend in some measure upon force, and to inspire them with terror."²

It cannot be denied that upon really practical questions, the good sense, temper, and experience of Guicciardini, often gave him a decided advantage over Machiavelli. But, on the other hand, even here the latter's superiority is manifest, inasmuch as he had an extraordinary faculty of regarding questions from a higher point of view and under a more general aspect. To give a final example—It has been seen with what eloquence Machiavelli affirmed, that the corruption of the Court of Rome and the temporal power of the Pope were the cause of the disunion and destruction of

¹ "Considerazione" on chap. xxiv. of bk. ii. of the "Discorsi." ² Ibid.

Italy. Guicciardini remarks upon this : "Of the Court of Rome it is impossible to speak with sufficient severity, for it is a standing infamy, an example of all that is most vile and shameful in the world. And it is also true that the Church has prevented the union of Italy in a single State ; but I do not know whether this be a good or an evil. A single republic might certainly have made the name of Italy glorious, and been of the utmost profit to the capital city ; but it would have proved the ruin of every other city. It is true that our division has brought many calamities upon us, although it should be remembered that the invasions of the barbarians began at the time of the Romans, exactly when Italy was united. And divided Italy has succeeded in having so many free cities, that I believe that a single republic would have caused her more misery than happiness. It is true that this might not have been the case under a monarchy, which is more impartial in the treatment of its subjects ; and thus we behold France and other countries living happily under a king. Yet, whether by fate, or by the nature of men, this land has always desired liberty, and therefore has never been able to unite under one rule. The Romans succeeded in it only by their great valour and strength ; but no sooner was the Republic extinguished, no sooner did the emperors' valour fail, than they easily lost their dominion. Hence I believe that if the Church has prevented the union of Italy, that it has not been for her unhappiness, inasmuch as she has thus been able to live according to her own nature."¹

Who can fail to perceive the truth of these observations, in so far as they refer to real history, to the real Italy of the Middle Ages, and in part even of the Renaissance? But Machiavelli, with his wider vision, also saw that Europe and society at large were necessarily changing, that great nations and modern States were in course of formation, and that these, having need of much greater strength, could no longer be restricted within the microscopic boundaries of the old Republics, and must be extended. But the Church that had rendered such extension impossible for the Italy of the past, equally forbade it to the Italy of the present.

It was also true that, during the Middle Ages, a single republic or monarchy would have been an insuperable obstacle to the liberty of the many cities which flourished during that period, and were the sources of the grand and varied culture of Italy. But

¹ "Considerazione" on chap. xii. of bk. i. of the "Discorsi."

Machiavelli had likewise noted that it was the free confederations, the republics and kingdoms possessing the faculty of expanding according to the Roman custom, which "desired to win, not subjects, but associates," and he always made reference to the French Parliaments as, in his opinion, the causes of that kingdom's prosperity. All this entirely escaped the notice of Guicciardini, because he refused to recognize anything beyond the actual and narrow realities amid which he lived.

Thus, from whatever point of view these two great writers are compared, we are always driven to the conclusion that the observations and precepts of Guicciardini may more readily, and often more usefully, serve as guides in the daily practice of life and affairs.¹ Machiavelli's precepts, on the contrary, open new horizons to the study of the logical and necessary connection of historical events, and to the study of human society and the action to be exercised upon it by the statesman. And to the statesman they afford rules which, although more general, are none the less practical as to the conduct to be pursued in great political crises, for which the counsels of personal experience acquired from one day to another are altogether inadequate.

¹ On the publication of Guicciardini's "*Opere Inedite*," Count Cavour hastened to read them, and then said to a friend: "This man had a real knowledge of affairs, and a far better comprehension of them than Machiavelli." Even Gino Capponi used to insist in familiar conversation, as he has also done in his "*History*," on Guicciardini's practical superiority, and surer knowledge of mankind. Capponi held that the writings of Machiavelli were "not sufficiently practical, not like the writings of one who had performed things himself, instead of witnessing their performance by others. . . . It has always appeared to me as though Machiavelli understood men in general better than the individual man, that he understood them as regarded what they did in common and with reference to public life; but that he neither studied nor understood them with reference to their individual qualities, nor to what they were at home and in the family: the which things are obstacles disregarded by speculative minds, but well understood by men practised in government" ("*History of the Republic of Florence*," vol. ii. p. 65). This is true and well observed; but it should be added, that Machiavelli aimed at the investigation of political, not private life; of peoples, governments, and princes, not of the individual or the family. He was the first to make a clear distinction between the two orders of research, the first therefore to initiate the modern science of politics.



CHAPTER IV.

The "Prince."



WE have seen that Machiavelli, having in the year 1513 retired to his villa near San Casciano,¹ and devoted himself to study, not only began the "Discourses," on which he worked intermittently for a long time, but during the same year wrote the whole of his book "Il Principe," of which the meaning and intention have given

¹ Machiavelli's villa stands on the Roman road, at rather less than seven Tuscan miles from Florence, and about three miles from San Casciano in the Pesa valley, on a spot called *Sant' Andrea in Percussina*. It is a very small and simple building, still bears its old name of the *Albergaccio*, and is used chiefly as the dwelling of a bailiff. It belongs to Count Alfredo Serristori, by whom it was inherited, together with the adjoining farm lands, constituting nearly the whole of Machiavelli's "*slender patrimony*," and which still retain their old names. Ippolita Machiavelli (the last of Niccolò's family) and the daughter of Alessandro, son of Bernardo, son of Niccolò, was married in 1610 to Pierfrancesco dei Ricci, and her daughter Cassandra, after a previous marriage, became in 1639 the wife of Senator Antonio Serristori, and in 1647 gave birth to a son named Luigi Serristori. Inside the house are inscribed these words:

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI,
ABITÒ QUESTA SUA VILLA NELL' ANNO 1513.

In 1869 the municipality of San Casciano caused to be affixed to the outer wall the following inscription, dictated by Prof. Atto Vannucci:

A NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI,
CHE QUI MEDITÒ E PROPUGNÒ LA LIBERAZIONE D'ITALIA
SCRIVENDO LE SUE OPERE IMMORTALI
SULL' ARTE DI REGGERE E DIFENDERE CON ARMI PROPRIE GLI STATI.

IL COMUNE DI SAN CASCANO
POSE QUESTA MEMORIA
NEL IV. CENTENARIO DELLA NASCITA
Del Grande Statista Italiano.

In the *Fanfulla della Domenica* (issue of 30th of November, 1879), Signor C.

rise to such interminable disputes. We have already observed that the "Discourses" contain, as it were, the germ of all that is written in the "Prince," which expounds at much greater length one of the many themes treated in the former work, but has an immediate and practical end in view, in addition to scientific and theoretical aims. In fact, it is this double tendency of the "Prince" that has given rise to so much dispute; since many commentators only recognized its practical aim, and exaggerated this to so great an extent as to discover in the book much that does not exist in it.

In the course of his political meditations Machiavelli never restricted himself to the sole contemplation of the Greeks and Romans; he also gave much attention to real life, with a view to the accomplishment of at least a portion of his ideas. For this reason he had been contented with his position as Secretary to the Republic, was miserable now that he was condemned to idleness and poverty, and most impatient to obtain some occupation or office that always eluded his grasp. He was a spectator of the daily and marvellous rise of the power and fortunes of the Medici

O. Pagani gave an account of a visit to this villa. He was told there of another villa, beyond San Casciano, on the hill of *Sant' Angelo a Bibbione*, and which is an old castle of majestic size. On going there he was told that according to tradition this was the villa in which Machiavelli had written the "Prince"; and an old woman related to him in full detail the identical particulars narrated by Machiavelli in a letter dated the 10th of December, 1513, mentioned by us in this chapter. All this aroused great uncertainty in Signor Pagani's mind, since he could not understand how a tradition so vivid and so exact in every particular could be extant in the place without having some basis of historic truth.

However, Machiavelli's will, as Signor Pagani also allows, clearly states that his villa and farm lands were situated at Sant' Andrea in Percussina, and not in Sant' Angelo a Bibbione, where another branch of the family possessed property. Then, too, there is the document containing a minute description of Machiavelli's possessions, namely, the Report to the Officers of the Catasto, published in the first volume of the "Opere" (P. M.), p. 55, and this document clearly proves that the very modest dwelling inhabited by Machiavelli was in Sant' Andrea di Percussina. The grand old castle at Sant' Angelo a Bibbione has on the first floor, as Signor Pagani himself tells us, "an endless *suite* of rooms." So how can it be supposed that this was the *small* villa inhabited by Machiavelli? But how are we to account for the local tradition, and the account given by the old woman, and that so entirely accords with the statements in the letter of the 10th of December, 1513? It is very easy to suppose that the tradition may have been born of the letter, and related to the old woman or her predecessors by some one who had read the letter. It is proved that Machiavelli owned a small villa at Sant' Andrea di Percussina, close to the village inn, and did not own a lordly castle at Sant' Angelo a Bibbione. We may also refer the reader to "Repetti's *Dizionario geografico, fisico, storico*," paragraph *Percussina* (S. Andrea in).

in Italy. Leo X., surrounded by artists and men of letters who praised him to the skies, and beloved by the Florentines, who took pride in him, was filled with ambition for himself and his kinsmen, and made the latter rule Florence with the mildness requisite for the success of his schemes. But although by this method he increased the power of the papacy, he hardly satisfied his relations, who indeed were always complaining of being obliged, as they said, to stay and "cajole men" in Florence. To meet their wishes, therefore, the Pope was continually planning how to provide them with new States elsewhere in Italy, where they might rule like true princes, and not as the timid protectors of a republic. We know that a project for giving the kingdom of Naples to Giuliano dei Medici was frequently discussed, and that the Duchy of Urbino had been really offered to and refused by him. There was also much talk of uniting Parma, Modena, Piacenza, and Reggio into a single State under his sway. This design of Leo X. was very similar to that formed on Romagna by Alexander VI. for the benefit of his son, the Duke of Valentinois, who, according to Machiavelli, had been able to carry it out with eminent skill. The provinces of Parma and Modena were, at that time, almost as much torn by factions as Romagna had been; ¹ therefore measures of nearly the same nature were required for their pacification and government. All the observations made by Machiavelli during his mission to Cæsar Borgia, all the theories upon the subject that had then flashed across his brain and been afterwards partly expounded in the "Discourses," all his political conceptions both old and new, were now revived in his memory by these events, and stirred his brain to feverish activity. The living, speaking image of the Duke was again present to him.

The moment was come to solve the problem he had so frequently studied, of how to found a new State by means of a new prince. First of all, such prince should be able to endow it with unity, by fusing various provinces into a single entity and accomplishing this fusion even by force, violence, and bloodshed; by having no scruples of any sort, and by giving it an army of its

¹ This is clearly seen by the letters written thence by Guicciardini in 1516, when Governor of Emilia. See his Legation to Emilia in the "Opere Inedite," vol. vii. See, too, the monograph by Signor Giovanni Levi: "Il Guicciardini e Domenico, d'Amorotto" (new edition, Bologna, Romagnoli, 1879). Also worthy of mention is the essay by A. Geffroy, "Une Autobiographie de Guichardin d'après ses œuvres inédites." "Revue des Deux Mondes," issue of 1st of February, 1874.

own. It would then be easy to extend its borders, and enlarge its dominions, so long as the newly acquired subjects were neither unduly oppressed, nor partially sacrificed for the good of others, as had hitherto been the case in republics. If the Pope desired to keep Florence for his own kinsmen, that city might be annexed to and confederated with the new State, under the same ruler, and yet retain its actual republican form. It might be possible to extend the frontiers of the State in the direction of Ferrara and Romagna; it might even be possible for it to embrace the whole of Italy, and its prince might thus win an immortal name, and rank with great founders of States like Romulus and Lycurgus. Machiavelli's imagination had taken wing, and he could no longer arrest its flight. For the success of this scheme knowledge of statesmanship was required; and he was versed in that knowledge, having given to it the experience and study of his whole life. How could it be possible that untaught youths like Giuliano and Lorenzo, or that the Pope himself should fail to understand how useful he might be to them, to the great and immortal glory of the Medici and of Italy. For they, too, must surely love that Italy and yearn to see her converted into a great nation, and freed from the foreigners who had trampled her in the dust? Would the Medici only give him some employment, even of the humblest sort, he felt assured of winning their favour by the value of his counsels and the grandeur of his designs. And inspired by these thoughts he at last seized his pen and composed the "Prince."

The truth of all this is clearly established by the evidence of his private letters. At the beginning of 1515 the old rumour that Giuliano dei Medici was to be made Lord of Parma, Modena, Piacenza, and Reggio was revived as a positive assertion, and further that Paolo Vettori, the brother of Francesco, was to be named governor of the new State. Accordingly, on the 31st of January, Machiavelli sent a letter to Francesco Vettori on the subject of the difficulties encountered in the government of a new State, especially when composed of various parts formerly appertaining to different States. "It is requisite," he said, "to convert these various parts into members of one body and to give this body unity. This can be accomplished either by going to reside there in person, or by sending a single governor who can win the obedience of all the subjects. If Giuliano remains in Rome, as he seems disposed, and sends a governor to each place, there will be nothing but disunion and confusion." "The Duke

of Valentinois, whose deeds I should always imitate were I a new prince, having recognized this necessity, named Messer Rimino¹ President of Romagna, which measure made those peoples united, submissive to his authority, well affected towards his power and full of confidence in it; and all the love they bore him, which was great considering his newness, was evoked by that measure. I think that this thing might easily be credited, by reason of its truth; and were I employed by your Paolo, that would be a means of making myself known not only to the Signore Magnifico, but to all Italy. . . . I thought it well to write to you of this, so that you might know our reasonings, and might, in case of need, pave the way for this matter."

"E nel cadere il superbo ghiottone
E 'non dimenticò però Macone."²

This letter clearly proves that although the "Prince" was essentially a theoretical book, the first idea of it was inspired by the design of forming a new State in Parma and Modena, or elsewhere, for the benefit of Giuliano. And it is no less clear how, in Machiavelli's mind, this conception was naturally and almost necessarily personified in Cæsar Borgia. With supreme art and enormous energy, Borgia had rapidly established his State in Romagna, organized and armed it, and then had immediately turned his thoughts to greater enterprises, in order to extend his dominion over the whole of Central Italy. The patriotism and imagination of Machiavelli were alike inflamed; the figure of the Duke assumed gigantic proportions, and became transformed into the likeness of the founder of a new kingdom, of a new Italy. This was the example he proposed to the Medici, this the end for which the "Prince" was written. That in quoting and extolling the deeds of Valentinois, he formed an ideal picture of them in his mind, and that we must therefore accept his picture with certain reservations, is clearly indicated even by the fact, that in the letter in question he quotes, among other things, the instance of

¹ Here the printed editions give the word *Monsignore* —, and the name is wanting; but it is certain that Machiavelli here alludes to Messer Rimino or Ramiro d' Orco, as he always styled him. The man's signature, as we have previously noted, was *Remigius de Lorqua*.

² Letter xl., in the "Opere," vol. viii. :

"For the proud glutton, even in his fall,
Did not forget Macone."

Messer Rimino, who was cut to pieces by order of the Duke. Can it be supposed that, when writing privately to Vettori, whose brother Paolo was to fill a post similar to that once held by Messer Rimino in Romagna, and whose favour Machiavelli was anxious to win—can it be supposed that he really meant to say that a prince should first make use of his ministers, and then cut them to pieces? He did not propose as models the special deeds or iniquities of the Duke, but only his shrewdness and political ability; and he maintained that in order to found a new State it was indispensable to constitute and organize it by the sword as the Duke had done; that it was necessary to hold it together by unity of command, to use men as instruments, and then get rid of them as soon as they became dangerous to the State. The two lines with which he concludes the letter, refer to his perpetual hope of obtaining employment of some kind.

Another letter, and certainly the most eloquent and beautiful that ever issued from Machiavelli's pen, was that written on the 10th of December, 1513,¹ and also addressed to Vettori. In this he first gives a description of the life led by him in his rustic solitude, and then goes on to explain, with the utmost precision and frankness, in what way, and with what object, he had applied himself to the composition of the pamphlet, as he calls it, that he had just finished, and was still correcting and polishing. "Since my last misfortunes, I have led a quiet country life, and, all counted, have not passed twenty days in Florence. I spent September in snaring thrushes; but at the end of the month, even this rather tiresome sport failed me. I rise with the sun in the morning, and go into one of the woods for a couple of hours to inspect the yesterday's work, and to pass some time with the woodcutters, who have always some troubles to tell me, either of their own or their neighbours'. On leaving the wood, I go to a spring, and thence up to my *uccellare*,² with a book under my arm, either Dante, Petrarch, or one of the minor poets, such as Tibullus, Ovid," &c. "I read their amorous transports, and the history of their loves, recalling my own to my mind, and time passes pleasantly in these meditations. Then I betake myself to the inn by the roadside, chat with passers-by, ask news of the

¹ This is the letter xxvi. in the "Opere," to which we have already referred.

² An *uccellare*, or *uccellanda*, is a small wooded enclosure on a hill top where decoy birds are kept, and nets stretched over the trees to snare passing flights.

—Translator's note.

places whence they come, hear various things, and note the varied tastes and diverse fancies of mankind. This carries me on to the dinner hour, when in the company of my brood, I swallow whatever fare this poor little place of mine, and my slender patrimony, can afford me. Dinner over, I go back to the inn. There I generally find the host, a butcher, a miller, and a couple of brick-makers. I mix with these boors the whole day, playing at *cricca* and at *tric trac*,¹ which games give rise to a thousand quarrels and much exchange of bad language, and we generally wrangle over farthings, and our shouting can be heard at San Casciano. Steeped in this degradation my wits grow mouldy, and I vent my rage at the malignity of fate, content to let it crush me in this fashion, if only to see whether it will not take shame of its work."

So far, this gives us a picture of Machiavelli, who throughout his life trained his intellect by reading old authors, studying his fellow men and meditating upon them, and who, although accustomed to live with the people, yet felt a continual need of nourishing his imagination upon poetry. But then, changing his style, he enters upon a graver theme, and at last tells us how he composed his book. "At nightfall I return home and seek my writing room, and, divesting myself on its threshold of my rustic garments, stained with mud and mire, I assume courtly attire, and thus suitably clothed, enter within the ancient courts of ancient men, by whom, being cordially welcomed, I am fed with the food that *alone* is mine, and for which I was born, and am not ashamed to hold discourse with them and inquire the motives of their actions; and these men in their humanity reply to me, and for the space of four hours I feel no weariness, remember no trouble, no longer fear poverty, no longer dread death, my whole being is absorbed in them. And since Dante says, that there could be no science without retaining that which is heard,² I have recorded that which I have acquired from the conversation of these worthies, and composed a pamphlet, 'De Principatibus,' in which I plunge as deeply as I can into cogitations upon this subject, discussing the nature of principedom, of how many species it consists, how these are to be acquired, how they are maintained,

¹ *Cricca*, a game of cards; *tric-trac*, a game of dice.

² . . . "che non fa scienza

Senza lo ritenere avere inteso."

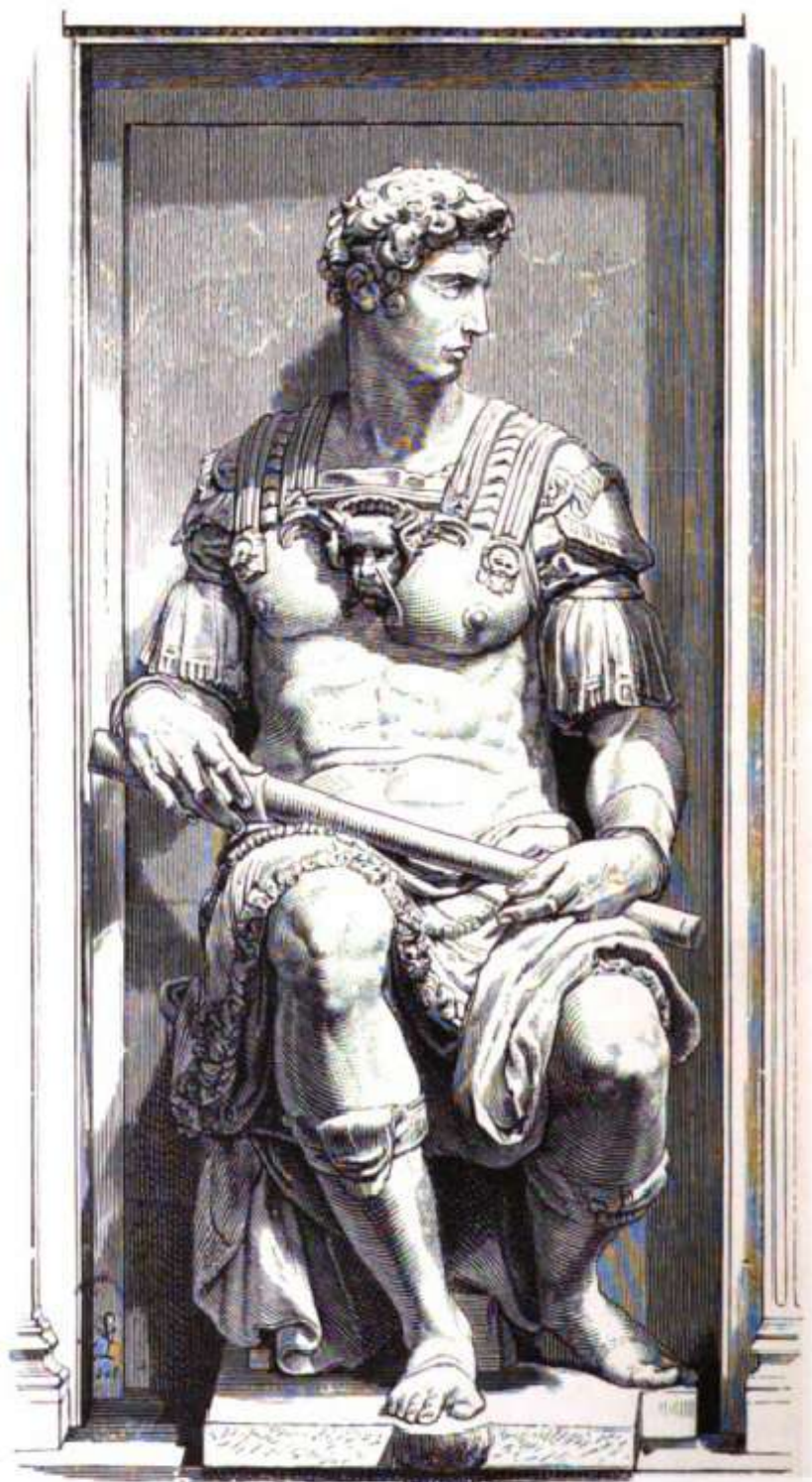
"Paradiso," Canto v. 41-42.

why they are lost ; and if you ever cared for any of my scribbles, this one ought not to displease you, and it should be especially welcome to a new prince ; for the which reason I dedicate it to His Magnificence, Giuliano. Filippo Casavecchia¹ has seen it, and can give you details of the thing itself, and of the conversations I have held with him thereon, although I am still employed in fattening and polishing it."

So complete is the evidence furnished by this passage, that we cannot understand how, after it had once been read, there could be so much dispute about the supposed hidden intentions of the "Prince." No matter what occasion first suggested the idea of the book, it is plain that Machiavelli neither wrote it to suit the moment, nor for the purpose of dedicating it to the Medici, but merely to sum up the results of long experience and ripe meditation upon the history and nature of his theme. When it was finished, however, he thought that he might turn it to good account by dedicating it to the Medici.* The letter goes on to say that he could not allow himself to accept the invitation of Vettori, who had asked him to stay in his house, because he had some business on hand, and because in Rome he would meet the Soderini, and be obliged to pay them a visit, in which case he feared that, on his return to Florence, he might have to dismount at the Bargello, instead of alighting at his own door, inasmuch as the government being new, was very suspicious. But for this fear he would have willingly visited Rome. Then again recurring to the subject of the dedication, he says : "I have spoken with Casavecchia as to whether it might or might not be well to offer this pamphlet of mine to Messer Giuliano. Also whether, if I

¹ Casavecchia had formerly been Commissary of the Republic at Barga, Fivizzano, and other places, whence he had written Machiavelli many letters, some of which are given in the Appendix of the Italian edition.

² There is positive proof that Machiavelli hoped to obtain employment from Giuliano dei Medici, who, as Busini states, was then supported by the Liberals. A letter addressed to Giuliano at the instance of Pietro Ardinghelli, dated 14th of February, 1515, informs him that Cardinal dei Medici had asked Ardinghelli whether there was truth in the report that Giuliano had taken Machiavelli into his service ; and, on Ardinghelli's reply that he neither knew nor believed the report, the Cardinal had rejoined, Neither do I believe it ; nevertheless, since they write to us from Florence on the matter, tell him (Giuliano) to do nothing of the kind, and "remind him that it would neither suit his needs nor ours." ("Li ricordo che non è il bisogno suo nè il nostro.") Vide "Archivio Storico Italiano," series iii. vol. xix. p. 231. This collection, formerly part of the Torrigiani MSS., is now in the Florence Archives.



GIULIANO DEI MEDICI.

offer it, it were better to send it or present it in person. On the one hand I doubt if the Magnificent would read it, and Ardinghelli¹ might end by usurping the honour of my labours. On the other hand, I am urged to offer it by the pressure of necessity," "for I am wearing out and cannot go on long in this fashion, without being rendered contemptible from sheer poverty; besides, I would that these Medici lords should take me into their service, even if they began by setting me to roll stones; for if I could not then succeed in gaining their favour, no one but myself would be to blame. And touching this thing of mine, if it were only read, it would be seen that I have neither wasted nor slept away the fifteen years I have given to the study of the art of government, and every one should be glad to make use of a man who has acquired so much experience at others' expense. And there need be no doubt as to my good faith, since, having always kept faith, I could hardly learn to break it now, and one who, like myself, has been honest and faithful for forty-three years, runs no risk of being able to change his nature, and my poverty bears witness to my good faith and honesty."²

Accordingly, as soon as the book was finished, Machiavelli thought of dedicating it to Giuliano, but he hesitated a great deal as to the expediency and opportunity of doing so; he also doubted whether the Medici would read it, and asked Vettori's advice upon the subject. And he hesitated so long that Giuliano died (1516) before the book had been presented, and the dedicatory epistle written for him was afterwards addressed to Lorenzo; but we are left in ignorance as to whether he ever saw or accepted it. Regarding Vettori's opinion, we only learn from his unpublished letters that he read a few chapters of the work, and that these pleased him beyond measure.³ He waited, however, to read the rest before pronouncing his final judgment, or advising on the expediency of dedicating and presenting it to Giuliano. But neither verdict nor advice was ever forthcoming, although Vettori was fully informed of everything by Casavecchia, who was in Rome precisely at that time, and had read the "Prince" in

¹ The Florentine, Pietro Ardinghelli, secretary to Leo X., was considered a deceitful intriguer.

² Letter of the 10th of December, 1513, previously quoted.

³ Letter of Vettori, dated 18th of January, 1514. See, too, the preceding letter, dated 24th of December, 1513. Both are given in the Appendix of the Italian edition, document xvii.

Florence. To Machiavelli's noble, elevated, and eloquent words, the ambassador only replied by a recital of his licentious love intrigues, and without adding a single word of encouragement. His silence and reserve clearly show that he was not at all persuaded of the advisability and expediency of the dedication, and still less of its usefulness to Machiavelli. It certainly might not suit the Medici to accept the book, especially if they really intended to carry out the counsels contained in it. Therefore Vettori confined himself to vague phrases, told Machiavelli that he could very well come to amuse himself in Rome, and he need not refrain from motives of delicacy towards the Soderini. No one would blame him for paying them a visit, which visit, however, was by no means obligatory, since he had held the post of secretary for three years before Piero's election as Gonfalonier for life, and had always faithfully performed his duty without any recompense beyond his usual salary. "Having spoken with Casavecchia, we both came to the conclusion that there was nothing to be done for you in Rome. It is said that Cardinal dei Medici is going to France, in which case I will speak to him of you, as you are acquainted with the country through having been there." He then went on to write of other matters, other vague hopes, without saying anything definite, and without ever affecting to count in the least upon the "Prince," which, in fact, was never of any benefit to its author.¹

In the letter of dedication addressed to Lorenzo, Machiavelli says that, in the hope of winning his princely favour, he begs to offer him his most precious possession, namely, the knowledge of the deeds of great men, acquired by lengthened experience of modern, and continued study of ancient affairs. He therefore proposes to teach him in a short time, that which he (the author) had only acquired with infinite pains and trouble. Nor should he be charged with presumption, since exactly as mountains are best seen and delineated from plains, and plains from mountains, so, to completely understand the people, it is necessary to be a prince, and to completely understand princes it is necessary to be one of the people.²

This short work, "*Il Principe*," consisting of twenty-six chapters, is certainly one of Machiavelli's best efforts. The subject

¹ See in the Appendix of the Italian edition the already quoted letters of Vettori.

² Letter of dedication prefixed to the "*Prince*," "*Opere*," vol. iv.



LORENZO DEI MEDICI.

being very circumscribed and well defined, leaves no room for the digressions and repetitions abounding in the "Discourses." We see a ruler arise and become a concrete shape in the author's mind, for the same reasons, according to the same process, and with the same characteristics with which we see him arise and take shape in real life, amid the varied and astonishing political disorder of the Renaissance, to the fore of the mediæval chaos, that forms, as it were, the background of the picture, and slowly but surely recedes to a greater distance. The various methods by which the tyranny, inevitable in the Renaissance, rids society of mediæval influences, and lays the foundations of the modern State, are precisely those which, according to Machiavelli, the prince is bound to adopt. And owing to the great resemblance between the author's creation and actual realities, the personage that he describes to us—detestable as he may seem to modern ideas—acquires a species of tragic truth overwhelming us at the same time with terror and amazement.

The reason why the book has all the importance of a great historical event, is because Machiavelli's idea and the new state of society simultaneously springing into existence around him, seem two aspects of the same revolution, occurring almost under our own eyes. The writer has an immediate and practical end in view; but it is neither a government office, nor the favour of the Medici. In no literature has any personal appeal ever proved to be a work of art or a creation of science. The prince described to us by Machiavelli is essentially Italian, but nevertheless has the general character of the great sovereigns of the Renaissance, and personifies therefore the transformation of mediæval Italy into a new and modern State. He is a tyrant, and it is essential for him to be a tyrant, if really determined to succeed in his purpose of uniting, arming, and liberating his country. If capable of imitating the legislators in whose image he should be made, after having armed his people and expelled the foreigners, he will proceed to establish good laws, and will provide for the duration and security of his work by entrusting its defence to the people. That in the corrupt Italy of those days all this was a mere dream is beyond doubt; but it was the dream of Machiavelli's entire life, and later we shall find him trying to convert even the Pope to it. So great was the power of the Medici in those days, so wonderful their prosperity! If they would only understand what immortal honour might be theirs, while retaining their power to the hour

dep.
of
Prince

of their death, was it not possible that the very magnitude of the enterprise might fascinate their intellect and subdue their will? This was Machiavelli's continual hope, it was to this that he tried to urge them, this that induced him to say: "I would they employed me, were it only to roll stones, for if I could not then win them over, it would be my fault, and not fortune's." He desired, he implored an office, but he intended to use it for the triumph of his ideas. And on many other occasions we shall find him labouring to this end.

In writing the "Prince" Machiavelli was so entirely dominated by the modern and national character of his subject, that, contrary to his usual custom, he derived nearly all his examples from contemporary history. Ferdinand the Catholic, ~~Louis XII.~~ Francesco Sforza, Alexander and Cæsar Borgia, then well-known and almost familiar figures in Italy, were the types he interrogated and which furnished him replies. Also, whenever, from inveterate habit, he chanced to refer to antiquity, he felt obliged as it were to allege some excuse: "I did not wish to depart from Italian and recent examples; yet I cannot avoid mention of Hieron of Syracuse."¹ And he goes on from chapter to chapter with logical exactitude, and with rapid, terse, eloquent, and most lucid diction. Every page is resplendent with beauty of style, and the whole sometimes appears to be a work of art, with an almost dramatic power carrying us on to the concluding chapter, where, instead of the catastrophe of the lugubrious drama, we find the apotheosis of the new Italy, the redeemed and united country. The celebrated final exhortation to the tyrant transformed into the princely deliverer, is the most eloquent address to be found in Italian literature.

Machiavelli starts with the declaration that having spoken of republics elsewhere, he now proposes to treat solely of principalities,² which he divides into two categories: the hereditary and the new. These he then proceeds to subdivide into entirely new principalities, and those only new in part. In the former the prince founds an absolutely new State, or takes renewed possession of it; in the latter, on the contrary, designated as mixed principalities, a new province is annexed to an old State. These latter were very numerous during the Renaissance, because great kingdoms were formed and aggrandized by conquest. The next point considered is that of new States in general. These, indeed, form the chief theme of the book, of which they had

¹ "Il Principe," chap. xiii. p. 50.

² Ibid., chap. ii. p. 2.

suggested the primary idea ; besides, as presenting far greater difficulties than hereditary States, greater study is required to gain knowledge of them, greater ability for their good government. "Conquest, in fact, gives offence to many ; and those who are benefited by it, expect more than can be conferred by the change."

"When, however," Machiavelli continues, "the newly acquired province is very similar to that to which it is annexed, fewer difficulties stand in the way ; and in order to overcome these, it is enough to preserve old customs and shed the blood of the former prince. But when everything in it is different, then there are great and manifold difficulties. In such case it is necessary either for the prince to fix his personal residence in the State, or to plant colonies of new inhabitants in its principal places, the which, although harmful to those despoiled of houses and lands, at least renders them powerless to offend, and keeps the others quiet for fear of incurring a similar fate. And it is a general rule that men should be either killed or caressed, because they can take revenge for slight injuries, but cannot for grave, wherefore the injury should be so grave as to be beyond all risk of reprisals. Then, too, it is expedient to try to conciliate weakly neighbours, since these quickly adhere to the new State, if it be strong ; but it is requisite to keep down powerful neighbours, and neither assist nor give entrance into your house to powerful strangers ; you must foresee things from afar and resort to sudden remedies. The Romans never concurred with the maxim of our princes, namely, that of *enjoying the benefits of time* ; but, on the contrary, preferred to enjoy the benefits of their own virtues and prudence, for time drives all things forward, and runs away with good as well as evil. When King Louis XII. came into Italy, he broke all these rules, and committed five blunders : he put petty potentates to death ; added strength to a power already greater than the rest, *i.e.*, that of the Pope and Valentinois ; introduced a powerful stranger, that is Spain, into Italy ; did not come to reside in Italy ; and failed to plant colonies there. And therefore, when the Cardinal de Rohan said to me that the Italians did not understand war, I replied to him, that the French did not understand statecraft, or would never have allowed the Church to rise to so great a power.¹ When, however, a free city is conquered, it can then only be held in three ways, nor do these always suffice : you

¹ "Il Principe," chap. iii.

must either demolish it, reside in it, or establish a liberal government in the hands of a few men who will preserve it for you. And in general he who conquers a free city and does not destroy it, may expect to be destroyed by it, since it will always rebel, urged by the great love of liberty that is inextinguishable in free men's minds, whereas he who is a slave readily changes his master."¹

MA The sixth chapter leads us to the core of the chief theme of the book, by beginning to treat of the new prince of a new State. "Such States," says Machiavelli, "~~depend above all~~ upon the merits of the prince; and therefore he is most secure who depends more upon his own merits than upon fortune, although the latter is required as well as the former. Moses, Romulus, Cyrus, and Theseus, owed to fortune the opportunity of displaying what virtue lay in them; but the one would have been useless without the other. In any case, no enterprise is more difficult of management, nor more doubtful of success, than that of making yourself the head and inaugurator of new institutions. First of all it is necessary to ascertain whether these innovators depend upon others' strength or their own; that is to say, whether they must stoop to others, or are able to exert their own power. In the first case things always go badly with them, in the second they almost always succeed; and this is also the reason why armed prophets were ever victorious, whereas those who were unarmed, like Savonarola, met with defeat."² As for those who attain to principedom by fortune, they reach it with little difficulty, and as though on wings; but can only maintain it with the utmost difficulty, inasmuch as they remain at the mercy of those that helped them to rise. They may, however, after having obtained the State by good fortune, supply it with the foundation it previously lacked by means of their own virtue; the which is occasionally seen to occur, although not without trouble to the architect and risk to the edifice."

And hereupon we are naturally bidden to remark the tragical figure of Cæsar Borgia, who gained his State by means of his father, and lost it with him. "But he had no sooner gained it, than, in order to establish it upon a solid basis, he did everything that was to be done by a prudent and virtuous man; wherefore no better precepts can be offered to a new prince, than those suggested by the example of his actions. For if, nevertheless, these measures failed to profit him in the end, that was by no

¹ "Il Principe," chap. v.

² Ibid., chap. vi.

fault of his, but owing to an extraordinary and extreme malignity of fortune. Alexander VI. could not safely begin to build up a State for his son elsewhere than in Romagna, where Faenza and Rimini were under the protection of the Venetians, who, therefore, opposed resistance. He was accordingly compelled to take advantage of the French descent that he had promoted. But no sooner had the Duke of Valentinois in this fashion made himself master of Romagna, than he perceived that, if wishful to proceed further, the forces he had in hand might fail him at any moment. In fact, when he desired to assault Bologna, he found the King adverse, and the Orsini, although his allies, very cold in the matter; and when, after seizing the Duchy of Urbino, he sought to enter Tuscany, the King stopped him outright. Thereupon the Duke decided to begin to form an army of his own, and to win over the followers of the Orsini, while awaiting an opportunity to put them to death; the which opportunity came easily to him, and was turned by him to the best account. For they (the Orsini), by their plot at the Magione, excited Urbino and Romagna to revolt against him; and he first of all reduced his State to submission with the aid of the French, and then, without trusting to any one, had recourse to stratagem. And so well did he know how to conceal his real purpose, that the Orsini made peace with him, and were so simple as to give themselves into his hands at Sinigaglia, where he put them to death. Thus, being at last assured of the captains remaining to him, and of the private forces he had organized, he had laid very good foundations for his future power. He was master of all Romagna, and of the Duchy of Urbino; and had gained the affection of the entire population of those States, who had begun to enjoy their prosperity."

"And since this part of his conduct is worthy of notice, and deserves imitation by others, I will not leave it unmentioned," says Machiavelli. "Romagna was full of plundering and crime of every sort, chiefly by fault of the princes who had ruled over it, and who, being poor, and seeking to lead the life of rich men, had recourse to every kind of theft and dishonesty. And among other things, they made laws, which they afterwards instigated men to break, in order, when there was much transgression, to be able to impose fines. Those who thus became impoverished carried on similar practices with others less powerful than themselves. Hence continual bloodshed and continual acts of revenge."

¹ For these particulars, see also the "Discorsi," bk. iii. chap. xxix.

So it was necessary to establish order and peace in the land. Then the Duke sent them, with absolute powers, one Messer Ramiro d'Orco, an extremely cruel and resolute man, who in a very short time brought the country into peace and unity. This done, his exceptional and excessive authority seemed no longer needful, and the cruelty with which Messer Ramiro had abused, and still continued to abuse it, rendered it dangerous. Wherefore the Duke suppressed that office, and instituted in its place an ordinary court of justice, in which every city of Romagna had a judge of its own, under the presidency of a most excellent, wise, and prudent man. And in order to persuade men that the severities inflicted had in no way proceeded from him, but solely from the wicked nature of his minister, he caused the latter to be found one morning hacked in two pieces in the public square of Cesena, with a bloody knife beside him. This ferocious spectacle caused the population mingled satisfaction and amazement. But we will now return to the point whence we started."¹ And thus Machiavelli coolly resumes his principal argument.

Here, however, it is necessary to remark, for the better comprehension of these facts so frequently quoted and repeated by Machiavelli, that the documents published in the last few years afford a much clearer explanation of the motives of his constant admiration for Borgia and Borgia's government in Romagna. We now possess indubitable proof that the Duke's method of administration was really far wiser and more intelligent than was previously believed. He executed many useful measures for the advantage of his poorer subjects in the cities and rural districts. As to the murder of Messer Ramiro, the man had already received many warnings from the Duke, admonishing him not to wanton oppress the people, and to stop the illicit traffic in provisions carried on by him to the continual injury of the poorer classes. And it was only when these repeated warnings were disregarded that the Duke, with summary justice, condemned him to death, proclaiming the event in a letter to the people, also of recent publication, as a piece of welcome news, and an example of remedial justice that had long been desired.²

"The Duke," continues Machiavelli, "had now to think of freeing himself from the supremacy of France; he therefore sought new adherents, and soon began to show coldness towards

¹ "Il Principe," chap. vii.

² G. Alvisi, "Cesare Borgia duca di Romagna." Imola, Galeati, 1878.

the French and vacillation on the arrival of the Spaniards. And he would have succeeded in everything, had not the death of Alexander interrupted his plans. He had not only foreseen the death of the Pope, but even the possibility of a hostile successor, and had prepared everything for his defence, endeavouring to get rid of the lords he had despoiled by killing as many of them as was possible, and foreseeing and providing for all things, in such fashion that the College of Cardinals, already diminished in number, was in great part won over to him, and his State of Romagna might be said to be established and secure. He was also in possession of Perugia and Piombino, was the protector of Pisa, and being no longer obliged to respect the French, could dash into the latter city and seize Lucca and Sienna without the Florentines being able to prevent him. All this would have given him a firm and solid basis, and he was about to succeed in his intent and complete his work the same year in which the Pope died, leaving him with Romagna alone consolidated, all the rest uncertain, hemmed in between two powerful hostile armies, and himself almost at the point of death. Nevertheless so great was his ferocity, courage, and shrewdness, that had he not had those two armies upon him, and been so seriously ill, he would have triumphed over every difficulty. For he told me himself that he had anticipated everything, provided for everything, save for being sick unto death at the moment of the Pope's decease." "Therefore, putting together all these actions of the Duke, I could not blame him; on the contrary, as I have said, it seems good to me to propose him as an example to be imitated by all those who through fortune and the arms of others, have attained to supreme command. For with his great mind and lofty ambitions, it was not possible for him to govern otherwise."¹

And after this, as though Cæsar Borgia were not bad enough, Machiavelli goes on to speak of those who attain the princely office, not by fortune, but merely by infamous means. To this end he gives two examples, sufficient for the imitation of those driven to similar means. And the first example quoted is that to which he so often makes allusion, of the Sicilian Agathocles, who "having by his military excellence become Prætor of Syracuse, and having first sought the friendship of the Carthaginians, then assembled the people and the Senate, and caused all the Senators and popular leaders to be slaughtered by his soldiery. Thus his

¹ "Il Principe," chap. vii.

security was established, and he succeeded in everything by his own deeds. It certainly cannot be said," he observes, "that it is a virtue to murder citizens, betray friends, and be without faith; but if we afterwards consider the courage of Agathocles in affronting and escaping from danger, in enduring and overcoming adversity, we can see no reason for judging him inferior to any most excellent captain. Nevertheless, his atrocious cruelty and inhumanity, together with his innumerable wickednesses, prevent us from ranking him among the most excellent of men; nor can we attribute either to fortune or virtue, that which he accomplished without either the one or the other." The second example is that of Oliverotto da Fermo, who was brought up by his uncle Giovanni Fogliani. "He dedicated himself to arms, and becoming a very skilful commander, determined to seize upon Fermo. He therefore wrote to his uncle that he wished to enter the city with a hundred knights in order to exhibit his splendour, and his uncle gave him an honourable reception, and lodged him in his own palace. Oliverotto, having arranged the plot with his confidants, invited his uncle and all the first men in Fermo to a banquet, and then had them all murdered at the same moment. After which, he rode through the city that was now his own, and would have later become a very formidable man, had not the Duke of Valentinois caused him to be strangled." "It may now be asked," adds Machiavelli, "how it was that Agathocles remained in security after his crimes, when so many other tyrants ended badly? All depends," he replies, "as to whether cruelties are well done or ill. Those may be said to be well done, if it may be permitted thus to speak of evil deeds, which are done suddenly for the sake of establishing a safe position, and not continued afterwards. Ill done are those which are also carried on afterwards. It is requisite from the first to calculate what cruelties are necessary, execute them at one stroke, and then reassure men's minds, otherwise you are forced to be always sword in hand. Injuries which are suddenly inflicted are less felt, and therefore give less offence, while nevertheless producing all the desired effect; benefits, on the contrary, should be conferred gradually, so that they be better relished."¹

He then goes on to treat of the civil principality, and again repeats, that this must be grounded upon the popular support, without which no government can have a secure foundation; it

¹ "Il Principe," chap. viii.

being most perilous to entrust it to the nobles, who wish to be masters themselves.¹ In all cases, however, the chief strength of States rests with the armies,² since it is above all things necessary to have the means of repulsing enemies and repressing subjects. Such is the principal scope of all government, according to Machiavelli, who neglects and even forgets to examine the many mixed elements constituting the State and society, such as religion, culture, commerce, and industry. Sometimes it would almost appear as though, in order to bestow exclusive attention on the State and the strength of the State, he endeavoured to separate it from society and the individual, and was prepared to sacrifice both to its prosperity, without altogether perceiving that in this way all things would go to ruin. ~~At any rate arms and politics were~~ his sole and constant thought. ~~Without armed strength and without much political wisdom no State can long be maintained.~~ "In the world, ecclesiastical principalities alone can be acquired by virtue or fortune, and maintained without either the one or the other, inasmuch as these are supported and upheld by old-standing religious institutions. Only ecclesiastical rulers hold States and do not defend them, have subjects and do not govern them, and their States are not snatched from them, and neither do their subjects rebel. Even when the Orsini and the Colonna were overthrown by Alexander VI., although the latter only aimed at founding a principality for Cæsar within the territories of the Church, it followed instead that at last the Church became more powerful than ever in her temporal dominion."³ Other States, however, may not hope for similar good fortune, and must depend upon prudent government and armed defence.

And now three successive chapters are devoted to the question of the armaments needful to the prince; and for Machiavelli, this was a question of the highest importance, inasmuch as he was accustomed to assert that good armies also imply good laws, and that where the former are lacking neither are the latter to be found. "Armies, then, consist of mercenary, auxiliary, and national forces. The first are always most dangerous, since they give way at the moment of trial, as was clearly proved in Italy, as soon as foreigners came down upon us with armies of their own. Only republics and princes with national armies can be assured of safety. And truly it is only with great difficulty that an armed republic falls beneath the sway of a single citizen, as is shown by

¹ "Il Principe," chap. ix.² Ibid., chap. x.³ Ibid., chap. xi.

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11

the example of the Swiss, who are all fully armed and in the enjoyment of the completest freedom. Rome and Sparta lasted for many centuries, being armed and free. Venice and Florence have reaped nothing but continual hurt and danger from mercenary troops. Our princes and priests being ignorant of warfare, had recourse to these, which at the beginning seemed mightily useful ; but the result of their merits has been that Italy has been overrun by Charles, ravaged by Louis, coerced by Ferrando, insulted by the Swiss. Among us mercenary troops have destroyed the infantry, which is always the backbone of an army. And this came about, because a few foot soldiers do not suffice, and many cost too much ; while on the contrary a free company is quickly formed with a moderate number of men-at-arms.¹ The troops of allies are still more dangerous, since they leave you at the mercy of him who comes to your aid, and always either fall away from you, or oppress, or constrain you." Then, recurring to his favourite example, he goes on to say : "I cannot doubt the fittingness of citing Cæsar Borgia and his deeds. He began with the aid of French auxiliary troops ; but perceiving his danger, had recourse to mercenaries who at least were paid by and dependent upon him, and then, recognizing how little security these afforded him, relied upon forces of his own. The difference between these and those was speedily seen by the reputation he acquired as soon as he leant solely upon his own soldiers and resources.² Therefore, the formation of a national militia should be the continual thought of the prince ; he should devote his whole mind to it, and even in reading history should meditate upon the deeds of great captains, in order to imitate them."³

Machiavelli, at this point, starts a still graver question. Intending to speak in general of that which may bring praise or blame to a prince, he says that he must now prepare to speak of matters already treated by many preceding writers. Here he alludes less to writers of antiquity than to those of the Middle Ages, such as Egidio Colonna and Dante Alighieri ; and to the scholars of the sixteenth century such as Panormita, Poggio, Pontano and many others, who had maintained that the sovereign should be possessed of every virtue, and should be an ideal pattern of religion and modesty, of justice and generosity. But Machiavelli wisely observes that, when desirous of rendering a real service to those who can understand him, it is far more expedient

¹ "Il Principe," chap. xii.

² Ibid., chap. xiii.

³ Ibid., chap. xiv.

"to seek the practical truth of the thing, rather than its mere semblance. And many have imagined republics and principalities such as have never been seen nor known to exist, for there is so much difference between how we live and how we ought to live, that he who leaves that which is done for that which ought to be done, studies his ruin rather than his safety ; because a man who should profess to be honest in all his dealings, would necessarily come to ruin among so many that are dishonest. Whence it behoves every prince, desirous of maintaining his power, to learn how to be dishonest, and to make use or not of this knowledge according to circumstances." "It would certainly be most praiseworthy for a prince to have every good quality and no bad ; but inasmuch as human conditions do not allow of this, it is necessary for him to have enough prudence to avoid all vices which might deprive him of his State, and if possible, even avoid those which would not deprive him of it ; but if this be impossible, why then let him yield to them with less precaution." And he insists upon this point and repeats : "Let him be heedless of the risk of infamy for such vices, without which it is hardly possible for him to save his State ; for if all things be well considered, something that seems virtue will be found among them, to follow which would entail his ruin, and something that seems vice, to follow which will ensure his safety and prosperity." ¹

Here the reader may be easily led into error, like many before him, if he does not keep in mind that throughout this composition, Machiavelli leaves the personal and private character of the prince almost entirely out of sight ; that he only treats of the prince as the representative, the head, the personification of the State. In fact, he makes indiscriminate use of the phrases, *his ruin*, and *the ruin of the State*, for the expression of one and the same idea. His error indeed consists in this, that he too frequently forgets that as this prince is still a man, it is impossible to admit that all personal and private characteristics should be entirely absent from his actions. But here, as in the "Discourses," the author's conception only succeeds in making its way to the light, on the one hand by the most absolute abstraction of political from private morality, and on the other by rendering the idea of the State concrete and personified in an imaginary being. In this being, in this, as it were, impersonal person, the private individual is inevitably merged in the politician. Yet that which Machiavelli

¹ "Il Principe," chap. xv.

says of the one is easily attributed to the other ; and when he speaks of the abstract personage, the reader always sees before him the real and concrete man. Hence continual confusion and misapprehension.

Key
 What, then, at least are the qualities which, according to Machiavelli, the prince should possess? The liberality so much insisted upon by the learned, especially with regard to men of letters, is not praiseworthy in him, since he spends not his own money, but that of others, and hence Machiavelli prefers that he should be parsimonious; only of the spoils of war has the prince the right to be lavish.¹ Is it better for him to be cruel or clement, loved or feared? "In general terms, it is certainly far better to be considered merciful; nevertheless mercy must not be badly employed. Cæsar Borgia was esteemed a cruel man; nevertheless that cruelty of his had set Romagna to rights, united it and brought it to a state of peace and good faith. And, in fact, he was more merciful than the Florentines, who, in order to avoid cruelty, allowed Pistoia to be destroyed by factions. It would be better, were it possible, to be loved and feared at the same time; but as that is not possible, it is better to be feared, when you have to choose the alternative. Love is maintained by a bond of obligation, which, owing to the wickedness of human nature, is always broken whenever it clashes with private interest; but fear is maintained by a dread of punishment that never abandons you. Men love at their own pleasure, but fear at the pleasure of the prince, who should therefore depend upon that which is his own, not upon that which is of others. Yet he may be feared without being hated, if he refrain from touching the property and woman-kind of his subjects, and if he avoid bloodshed excepting when there is good cause and manifest justification for it; inasmuch as men more easily forget the loss of their father than of their property. Besides which, when you begin to live by other's property there is no end to it, whereas occasions for bloodshed may seldom arise."²

Key
 And now follows the celebrated chapter, the butt of so much abuse, on the question of keeping faith or breaking it. That it is right to keep faith, says Machiavelli, is understood by all; "nevertheless experience has proved in our own times that the princes who have achieved great deeds are those who have held good faith of small account, and have known how to bewilder men's brains

¹ "Il Principe," chap. xvi.

² Ibid., chap. xvii.

by cunning, and in the end have succeeded better than those whose actions have been ruled by honour." "There are two modes of fighting, one by law, the other by force; the first is proper to man, the second to brute beasts; and as the first is not always efficacious, so it is frequently necessary to recur to the second. Therefore a prince should know how to play both the beast and the man, as indeed the ancients tried to signify by the fable of Achilles educated by Chiron the centaur. A prince, then, should know how to assume the beast nature of both the fox and the lion, for the lion cannot defend himself against snares, nor the fox against wolves. . . . Those that merely play the lion do not understand the matter. Therefore a prudent lord neither could nor should observe faith, when such observance might be to his injury, and when the motives that caused him to promise it are at an end. Were all men good this precept would not be good; but since men are bad and would not keep faith with you, you are not bound to keep faith with them." "It is necessary," he again repeats, "to give a good colouring to your nature, and be a great dissembler and dissimulator, because men then readily allow themselves to be deceived. Alexander VI. did nothing but deceive, and thought of nothing else during the whole of his life, nor did any other man ever vow with stronger oaths to observe promises which he afterwards broke; nevertheless, he succeeded in everything, for he was well acquainted with this part of the world."

Nor is this all. It is not necessary for a prince to have the good qualities of which we have treated above; but it is highly necessary that he should seem to have them. "Indeed, I will dare to say that it is to his injury to possess, and always to act upon them, while it is useful for him to appear to possess them; as, for instance, to seem pitiful, faithful, humane, religious, thorough, and to be all these; but it is well to have your mind so trained that when it is

* Madame de Rémusat, in speaking of Napoleon I. in her "Mémoires," tells us that: "Toujours il se défait des apparences d'un bon sentiment; il ne faisait nul cas de la sincérité, et n'a pas craint de dire qu'il reconnaissait la supériorité d'un homme au plus ou moins d'habileté avec laquelle il savait manier le mensonge; et à cette occasion il se plaisait à rappeler que l'un de ses oncles, dès son enfance, avait prédit qu'il gouvernerait le monde, parce qu'il avait coutume de toujours mentir. M. de Metternich disait-il encore, est tout près d'être un homme d'État, il ment très bien" ("Mémoires," Paris, C. Lévy, 1880, vol. i. p. 105). And further on the lady quotes these other words of Napoleon I.: "Tenez, au fond, il n'y a rien de noble ni de bas dans ce monde; j'ai dans mon caractère tout ce qui peut contribuer à affermir le pouvoir, et à tromper ceux qui prétendent me connaître" (Ibidem, vol. i. p. 108).

expedient not to have these qualities you may know how to become entirely different." And it should also be understood that a prince, particularly a new prince, cannot practise all the virtues constituting the goodness of other men, being often "obliged, for the maintenance of his State, to act against faith, against charity, against humanity, and against religion. It therefore behoves him to have a mind disposed to change, according to the winds, and as the vicissitudes of fortune may ordain; and as I said before he should, if possible, practise goodness, but under the pressure of necessity should know how to pursue evil. Accordingly, a prince should be very careful to let nothing escape his lips that is not pregnant with the five qualities above described, so that in his aspect as in his words he may seem all piety, faith, humanity, integrity, and religion. And nothing is more necessary than to appear to possess this latter quality, religion, inasmuch as the mass of mankind judge rather by sight than touch, for all can see, while few can feel. Every one sees that which you seem to be, few feel that which you are, and those few do not dare to oppose the voice of the majority having the majesty of the State at their back. . . . Let the prince then determine to conquer and maintain his State; the means employed by him will always be deemed honourable, and universally praised, for the popular mind is always caught by appearances and by the final result of things. . . . A certain prince of these days, whom it is as well not to name, never preaches anything but peace and faith, while yet most adverse to both, and had he observed either the one or the other, would have frequently lost either his reputation or his State." *

Shocking and detestable as all this may appear, it is nothing but the confirmation of certain keenly observed truths, although expounded in a paradoxical shape giving them the aspect of guilty blunders. In point of fact, Machiavelli merely repeats the axiom that the politician and the diplomat cannot always speak the truth; that in certain cases they may, and indeed are bound to carefully hide the truth, and compelled to blind those with whom they are in contact, unless they wish to expose themselves, their party, and sometimes the State itself, to serious risk. Now, this is a point that might be discussed to any extent; but so long as society and politics remain as they were then and still are, it must

* "Il Principe," chap. xviii. Here the author would seem to allude to Ferdinand the Catholic, judged both in Italy and elsewhere to be a past-master in deceit.

unpleasant prince

THE "PRINCE."

= State therefore

personal morality
not applicable

be acknowledged that this is how the matter unfortunately stands. The politician is not an individual addressing another individual; he is the representative of a State, of a party; he is almost a collective being, whose words have a very different value, aim, and effect, from the value, aim, and effect of the utterances of a private person. Sometimes, indeed, even when anxious to speak the truth, it may be absolutely impossible for him to do so. Not only may declaration of the truth have disastrous effects, but its unreserved and naked avowal to the public, often causes the statesman to be interpreted in an opposite sense to that expressed by his words. For the public also is a collective being, understanding things in a way very different from that in which they would be interpreted by a single individual, and requiring guidance of quite another kind. Of course there is a loyal and a disloyal policy, and there is an honest and a dishonest; but that was a question Machiavelli could not yet take into consideration, having first to determine the nature of the art of politics, the chosen theme upon which he chiefly dwelt. In pursuing this road, he again comes to the conclusion that the supreme duty of the prince is to constantly uphold the State, and that all means are justified which are really necessary to that end, the which precept we have already examined. For the better definition of his idea, Machiavelli then adds, that the action of the statesman is efficacious, not according to its real, but according to its apparent intention, which is of much value in politics, and often indeed a genuine reality. To be good and sincere without succeeding in being recognized as such, is useless in politics, whereas to be merely thought sincere and good may be fruitful of real and advantageous results to the State and its ruler. Thus a prince, who without belief in the religion of his people, nevertheless shows it respect, or in certain cases even allows the populace to think he has faith in it, may be acting more wisely than he who feigns to despise religion, while really believing in it. No one condemned Napoleon I. for the respect paid by him in Egypt towards the Mussulman creed; no one condemns the English for showing deference to the faith of the Hindoos. This by no means implies that religion is only to be regarded as an engine of government, an opinion that Machiavelli has so often been unjustly accused of entertaining. Undoubtedly religion is an engine of government in the hands of the statesman; and this signifies that he is bound to hold it in much respect, and recognize it as a force to be turned to account. But

this implies no expression of opinion on the intrinsic value of religion in itself. The Statesman's belief or non-belief in it is a question for his private conscience alone, and one therefore upon which Machiavelli felt by no means obliged to dwell. Indeed, it may truly be asserted that he never expressed any contempt for religion in general, and on the contrary, frequently declared that a religious people is needed for the establishment of liberty, as he also frequently repeated that Italy had become corrupt from lack of religious feeling.

19
 In chapter xix, Machiavelli sums up all that he has said concerning the prince's obligation of not making himself hated, and again refers to the qualities which it is expedient for him to possess. He must never deprive his citizens of their property, never insult their women; he should always preserve a reputation for gravity and courage. There are two things more dangerous to him than anything else: attack from without by external enemies, and attack from within by conspiracy; and upon this last point the author alludes briefly to what we have already read in the "Discourses," but without quoting that work, of which the chapter on conspiracies was still unwritten. And then, recurring to one of his favourite maxims, Machiavelli goes on to say that a prince should not exasperate the nobility, but should, however, always favour the people, unless he wishes to be certain of coming to ruin. But, as the history of the Roman Emperors, many of whom were entirely dependent upon their armies, might be thought by some to contradict this axiom, Machiavelli pauses to speak of these Emperors, in order to indicate the diversity between their condition and that of modern princes. The conclusion he arrives at is this: "that whereas those Emperors depended on their soldiery, contemporary princes, with the exception of the Sultan, depend on the people; and therefore it is enough for these to avoid enraging the nobility, provided they keep the people satisfied, and in fact, this happens in well regulated kingdoms, among which France may certainly be included." "For in that country there is an infinite number of good institutions, upon which the liberty and safety of the king depend; and the foremost of these institutions is the Parliament and its authority; for he who established that kingdom, knew the ambition and insolence of the nobles, and judged it necessary for them to have a curb in their mouth for their due restraint; but on the other hand, knowing the hatred of the masses towards the

nobles to be founded upon fear, and wishing to reassure the masses, he would not allow this (institution of parliament) to be the special care of the king, in order to avoid his being accused by the nobles of favouring the people, or accused by the people of favouring the nobles ; and therefore he erected a third power, which, without any mission from the throne, should combat the nobles and favour the lower classes. Nor could there be any better and more prudent institution, nor one better fitted to ensure the safety of the king and the kingdom. . . . I once more come to the conclusion that a prince should respect the nobles, but should not make himself hated by the people." ¹ And this is the reason why those are much mistaken who, unaware that the modern principality is founded upon the people, refuse to arm their own subjects lest they should become their enemies, and do not comprehend that national armies are the only defence upon which certain reliance can be placed.

"When, however, a new province is acquired as an appendix, as it were, to the original State, it must be ruled by the subjects of the latter, and the new subjects must, if necessary, be reduced to impotence. And in similar cases it is of great service to the prince to perform some enterprise, affording him an opportunity of displaying his strength, and should no such occasion arise, to stir up some enemy to bring it about. Mistaken, too, was the old system of the Florentines, in trying to hold Pisa by fortresses, and Pistoia by factions. The latter system had also fatal results for the Venetians." And as to fortresses, although Machiavelli does not condemn their use so absolutely at this point as elsewhere, yet he always shows how little trust he puts in them, whether for the purpose of reducing either old or new subjects to submission, and always reiterates, that in the first case it is necessary to confide in the affection of the people, and in the second, on your own strength, and by seeking continual opportunities of displaying it in venturous enterprises. "Such was the course pursued by Ferdinand the Catholic, who first trained his army, then besieged Granada and drove out the Moors, and finally attacked Africa, France, and Italy. And it should be remembered that in these cases it is requisite to frankly avow yourself either a friend or an enemy ; nor must you try to follow neutral courses, for none such exists, and real prudence always lies in choosing the less bad as best." ²

¹ "Il Principe," chap. xix.

² Ibid., chap. xxi.

Hereupon Machiavelli, for the first and only time, pauses to give a little consideration to other elements of human society than war or politics. The prince, he says, should encourage his citizens to quietly devote themselves to their own occupations and business, to trade, agriculture, and every other concern, "so that one man may not abstain from improving his property from fear lest it should be taken from him, nor another from starting a trade for fear of fines; and he (the prince) should hold out rewards to those willing to undertake such things, and to all who plan anything for the amplification of his city or his State. . . . Besides these matters he should, at convenient epochs of the year, keep the people "engaged with festivities and shows." In this way Machiavelli places industry, commerce, and festivities almost upon the same footing, regarding all alike as means of government. Nor does he say anything more about social progress and the necessity of promoting it; so that these scanty words only serve as an additional evidence of the frequently noted fact that he was solely concerned with politics; "saw nothing but the State, the arts by which it was to be maintained, the armaments by which it was to be defended, and that he sacrificed everything to this end."²

In fact, in the following chapter he immediately proceeds to speak of the choice of a secretary.

¹ "Il Principe," chap. xxi.

² All efforts to prove the contrary have invariably failed, since they were too plainly contradicted by facts. Herr Karl Knies brought out a careful work, entitled: "Niccolò Machiavelli als volkswirtschaftlicher Schriftsteller," in the "Zeitschrift für die gesammte Staatswissenschaft." Achter Jahrgang, zweites und drittes Heft (Tübingen, 1852). In this he endeavours to prove that Machiavelli had original ideas even upon political economy; but he only succeeds in extracting from that writer's works a series of phrases and remarks bearing more or less directly upon economical phenomena, and that are as easily to be found in many other historians and politicians of the time. In the chronicles of the "Trecento," and particularly in those of Villani, there are many and more valuable remarks to the same effect. And in praising this work, Mohl very justly observes, that it is a better proof of the acumen and diligence of Herr Knies, than of the economic value of Machiavelli's writings. "Mit grossem Fleisse sind die ganz gelegentlichen und zerstreuten Sprüche Machiavelli's über wirtschaftliche Beziehungen zusammengestellt; das Hauptergebniss dürfte aber doch wohl mehr ein Beweis von dem Scharfsinne des Bearbeiters, als ein Nachweis von irgend bemerkenswerthen Kenntnissen und Gedanken des Florentiners über die Wirtschaft den Völker und Staaten sein. Sagt er doch selbst in einem seiner Briefe, dass er über die Verarbeitung von Seide und Wolle, über Gewinn und Verlust nicht zu reden wisse" (Mohl, *op. cit.*, p. 532, in the notes).

This choice serves as a test of the prince's sagacity. There are some men who can understand things by the light of their own intelligence, and therefore succeed excellently well, and without needing any one to help them; others again can neither understand things of themselves, nor even with the aid and explanations of others, and these prove utterly incapable. But there are many who, without being able to comprehend things by themselves, can understand and profit by others' advice, and to such men a secretary is of the greatest service, as was Antonio da Venafro to Pandolfo Petrucci, who, thanks to the good choice he had made, and the aid he derived from it, was esteemed a man of excellent parts. The worth of the secretary is known by seeing him think of his prince's advantage and not his own, for he that has the management of another's State should never think of himself, but always of his prince, who on his side is bound to think of his secretary, enriching him, and loading him with honours, so that he may have nothing left to desire.¹ It is, however, always necessary to avoid flatterers, who are the scourges of courts. The prince must not permit all men to say whatever they choose, and neither must he allow himself to be flattered; but must select a few wise and prudent men, who may freely speak the truth to him touching all matters upon which he interrogates them. Then let him deliberate by himself and remain firm to his decision. Nor let it be said that in this way he would seem to have no sagacity of his own and to wish to derive it from others, "for it is a general and infallible rule, that no prince without wisdom of his own can be wisely counselled by others, unless indeed it happened that he trusted altogether to one who entirely governed him and chanced to be a man of consummate prudence." "In such case he might certainly be well guided, but would be at the mercy of others, and speedily fall into straits. By asking advice from more than one, he can choose and arrange matters; but then he must be wise and capable of choice, otherwise he will never receive consistent counsels, nor be able to knead them into consistency."²

The above precepts, if observed, will give a new prince the semblance of an old one, and that in a very short time, since his actions are far more noticed, "and when recognized as virtuous, far more efficacious in gaining and holding men than those of a prince of old blood. . . . And thus he (the new prince) will

¹ "Il Principe," chap. xxii.

² Ibid., chap. xxiii.

B. view aesthetic

possess the twofold glory of having founded a new principality, and beautified and strengthened it with good laws, good armies, good friends, and good examples ; even as he will gain twofold ignominy, if, being born a prince, he has lost all by lack of prudence." "For if we now consider these Italian princes who have lost their States in our own times, we shall see that they all lacked armies of their own ; and also that certain of them knew not how to conciliate the people, and certain others failed to conciliate the nobles, since States are not lost save by errors such as these. And therefore princes must lay the blame on themselves and not on others.¹ It is true that many believe the affairs of this world to be so ruled by fortune and by God, that men can do nothing in the matter ; and it might therefore seem useless to think too much about it and better to let yourself be ruled by fate. This opinion is much diffused in our days, owing to the great changes occurring in Italy, beyond all range of human conjecture." "Nevertheless, since our free will is not extinguished, I deem it may be true that fortune is the arbiter of one-half of our actions, but that the guidance of the other half, or somewhat less than half, is still left to ourselves. And I would compare fortune to one of those destructive rivers, which when in fury flood the plains, overthrow trees and buildings, tear away soil from one place and carry it to another ; every one flies before these rivers, every one is swept down by them without any possibility of resistance ; and yet, mighty as they be, there is no reason why men should not erect defences against them in fair weather, by means of banks and dykes ; so that when the waters rose they might either be diverted into canals, or their rage held in check and rendered less harmful. It is the same with fortune, who asserts her power whenever no virtue be organized to withstand her, and turns her fury wherever there be neither dams nor dykes to keep it within bounds. And if you consider Italy, which is the seat of all these changes, and first set them in motion, you will see that it is an open country without embankments or other defences. For were it fortified by suitable virtues, even as Germany, Spain, or France, this flood would either have caused fewer changes, or not have come upon us at all." And the great vicissitudes in the fortunes of princes are caused, as Machiavelli had frequently asserted and now repeats, by lack of harmony between their qualities and the nature of the times ; for times alter, while

¹ "Il Principe," chap. xxiv.

men cannot change their own nature ; whence it happens that those who were fortunate at one time, are either ruined all of a sudden, or things cease to come about according to their desires. And this easily explains how, "since fortune varies, and men remain obstinate in their own conceit, they are happy while in agreement with fortune and unhappy when at odds with it. I hold, therefore, that it is better to be impetuous than cautious ; for fortune is a woman, and in order to keep her in subjection, it is necessary to beat her and flout her ; and we see that she is more readily conquered by those acting in this wise, than by those who woo her coolly. Then, too, ever like a woman, she is friendly to the young, for these are less cautious, more furious, and address her with greater audacity."¹

We have now come to the final chapter, concluding with the very and justly renowned exhortation to the Medici, comprising the synthesis of the "Prince" and of Machiavelli's ruling political idea. "Considering, therefore, all the things treated of above, and turning over in my mind whether in Italy at this moment the times be of a sort to do honour to a new prince, and whether there be matter affording opportunity to a prudent and virtuous man to introduce new institutions honourable to him and beneficial to the mass of mankind in this country, it appears to me that all things concur to the advantage of a new prince, and that there was never a moment more fitting than the present." And if, in order to test the virtue of a Moses, a Cyrus, and a Theseus, it was requisite for Egypt, Persia, and Athens to be reduced to the miserable conditions that we find described, so, in order to test the virtue of the Italian intellect, "it was requisite for Italy to be reduced to her present state, and to be more captive than the Jews, more enslaved than the Persians, more divided than the Athenians, without a head, without discipline, bruised, bespoiled, lacerated, ravaged, and subjected to every kind of affliction." "And although more than once we have beheld some one affording us a gleam of hope that he had a mission from God to redeem our country, yet he was ever repulsed by fortune, so that Italy still awaits him who is to come to heal her wounds." See how she implores Heaven to send her one to deliver her from this barbarous cruelty and insolence ! See, too, how she is all ready and willing to follow a banner, provided any man be found to raise it. Nor at present is there any in whom she may better place her trust than in your illustrious House,

¹ "Il Principe," chap. xxv.

which, thanks to its virtues and fortune, and its favour in sight of God and the Church, of whom it is now the supreme ruler, might well take the lead in this work of redemption." "There is much justice here and great willingness in men's minds ; prodigious signs have been seen portending mighty changes ; all is in favour of your greatness ; the rest must be accomplished by you, for God has no desire to deprive us of our free will."

Nor need you lose heart because of the example of those who have failed in the same enterprise, for if you will establish the new military organization, you will see that the necessary materials may speedily be found. There is plenty of virtue here in individuals, when leaders are at hand ; and we see that in duels and conflicts between small numbers, Italians always gain the victory by their strength, their skill, and their cleverness. You must arm your own people and depend upon a national infantry capable of being trained to excellence. Although the Swiss and Spanish troops are esteemed terrible, they are not without defects, and a third order of infantry in Italy might surpass them. The Spaniards cannot withstand cavalry, and the Swiss ought to fear foot soldiers, on finding them no less sturdy than themselves in the field ; wherefore a new infantry might be trained capable of resisting cavalry and fearless against unmounted men, the which could be contrived, not by new styles of weapons, but by different organization. And these are the things bringing fame and greatness to a new prince." "This occasion then must not be let slip, for thus Italy may at last behold her deliverer. Nor have I words to express the affection with which he would be welcomed in all these provinces which have suffered so much from foreign invasions, nor to express the thirst for revenge, the obstinate faith, the devotion and tears ! What gates would be closed before him ? what population deny him obedience ? what intrigues would be opposed to him ? what Italian refuse him respect ? This barbarous domination stinks in all men's nostrils. Let, then, your illustrious House undertake this task, with the courage and confidence with which just deeds are undertaken ; so that under the banner of your House this country may rise to nobility, and under its auspices this saying of Petrarch be verified :

" *Virtù contro al furore
Prenderà l'arme e fia il combatter corto :
Chè l'antico valore
Negl' Italici cor non è ancor morto.*" *

* Roughly rendered : "When Virtue takes arms against Fury, short will be the fight, for in Italian hearts still lives the ancient might."

Thus ends the slender volume that will ever remain an immortal monument in the history of literature. In the "Discourses" Machiavelli does not always proceed rapidly and directly to his end; often, indeed, he comes to a pause, turns back and repeats himself. The various elements of his political idea are to be found in the "Discourses," sometimes thrown together without any successful attempt at arrangement or fusion, sometimes even in apparent disagreement. He never attained any genuine and systematic unity, nor was it possible for him to do so, for although he aimed at the foundation of a new science, he had neither the wish nor the power to create a system. The unity of his science is rather to be found in his mode of thought, in his novel conception of society and the State, in his judgment of the conduct of the politician, in the novelty of his method, and in certain continually ruling ideas. When Machiavelli is not under the absolute sway of these ideas, he frankly records his own observations on past and present events, and, like Guicciardini, is ever careless whether or no these observations always accord one with another, or with assertions made by him elsewhere. Even the "Prince" cannot be said to have a system; but at least in that work the author's fundamental ideas are reduced to unity by their personification in the legislator and ruler who is to organize and regenerate the country. This idea, this ideal personage, first inspired in Machiavelli's mind by the examples of antiquity and on the model of Romulus, Lycurgus, and Solon, is also frequently brought before us in the pages of the "Discourses," sometimes singly and in an almost abstract form, while at other times presented in a more concrete and modern shape in association with Francesco Sforza, Cæsar Borgia, and Ferdinand the Catholic. But in the "Prince" we have no longer an abstraction, but a concrete, real and living personage; the type and image of the sovereigns of the Renaissance. This type seems to deprecate all connection with antiquity while still deriving many direct examples from it, as for instance in the case of Philip of Macedon, when summoned by Isocrates to unite Greece and combat the barbarians.

Machiavelli being dominated, we might almost say overpowered by his idea, endeavoured to force it upon the Medici, whom he tried to convert into the likeness of his personage. All this, as we have already said, was a mere dream, for the Italians were corrupted at that time; the Medici, incapable of comprehending the nobility of the idea, were equally incapable of soaring to the greatness

demand of them ; and there was not only the Pope, but also the temporal power to be reckoned with, whose roots stretched throughout Italy and into foreign lands. Nevertheless, this creation of a thinker's brain had all the importance of an historical incident, for Machiavelli had foreseen that which was bound to ensue in Europe, and by his proclamation of it, helped to precipitate the course of events. It is beyond doubt that the "Prince" had a more direct action upon real life than any other book in the world, and a larger share in emancipating Europe from the Middle Ages. In the last chapter the personage originally conceived as being outside society and the people, and towering above both, in order by force and violence to endow them with unity and organic shape, is drawn nearer to them, confounded with them, and ends by representing their highest aspirations, personifying their most secret conscience. As, in European history, tyranny first helped to mould national unity into shape, and then, by supporting the third estate and the people against the aristocracy, underwent a gradual transformation, finally leading to liberal representative monarchies, so the "Prince" slowly assumes shape and development before us. Machiavelli's dream was so thoroughly inspired by truth, reality, and political necessity, that it became a prophecy of the future. Then, as regards Italy, all that he wrote in his exhortation appears an almost exact description of that which, after an interval of three centuries and a half, we have seen accomplished under our own eyes. Only, therefore, after facts had proved the truth of the dream, was it possible to grasp the whole conception of the Florentine Secretary, and appreciate the prodigious originality of his mind.





CHAPTER V.

The critics of the "Prince"—Contemporaries and Florentines after 1530—Defenders of the Church—Jesuits—Charles V. and statesmen—Protestants—Christina of Sweden, Frederick II. of Prussia, Napoleon I., Prince Metternich—Philosophers and critics—Ranke and Leo—Macaulay—Gervinus and more recent critics.



ALTHOUGH Machiavelli always expounded his opinions with a lucidity that at times seems almost excessive, yet, throughout the whole history of literature, we find no other writer the subject of so many and different interpretations. To his "Prince" in particular, hidden and mysterious purposes have been attributed; endeavours made to prove that work to be in open contradiction with the "Discourses." And when it came to be demonstrated that no such contradiction existed, then not only were both works simultaneously made the theme of subtle commentary and artificial hypothesis, but a similar fabric was woven about the author's political conduct and character. These interpretations being very numerous, very varied, and often maintained by men of great learning and ability, the result has been that the enigma of Machiavelli himself has been further complicated by that of his interpreters. We have not the slightest wish to compile a lengthy catalogue of the truly amazing number of writers who have expressed different views of the Florentine Secretary. The task would lead us beyond all due limits of space, and has besides been already begun by many others, and admirably carried on by Mohl, whose work, concluded in 1858, only requires to be brought

down to the present day.¹ For our purpose it is sufficient to notice a few of the commentators and expounders of Machiavelli, in order to define the different channels of criticism and investigate the causes of so many contradictory modes of judging the same author.

During Machiavelli's life neither the "Prince" nor the "Discourses" were printed, but the first work in particular soon obtained a wide circulation in manuscript. One of the two copies we have in Florence made by Buonaccorsi from the original, is accompanied by a letter from the same to Pandolfo Bellacci, in which he says that he is sending him Machiavelli's "recently composed work," in which he will find described "all the merits of principalities, all the modes of preserving them, and all their defects, together with an exact account of ancient and modern history." He then goes on to beg Bellacci "to constitute himself a most sturdy champion against all those who, through malignity or envy, should try, according to the usage of these times, to bite and rend him" (Machiavelli).² These words show that no scandal was feared, but only criticism; and they likewise prove that even the mediocre intelligence of Buonaccorsi had instantly grasped, and with sufficient clearness, the meaning, aim, and merit of the volume. We have seen that Vettori hastened to express high praise of the first chapters. Guicciardini, in commenting upon the "Discourses," frequently dwelt upon the maxims repeated in the "Prince," and although he often disagreed from Machiavelli, he was never scandalized by his utterances, never hinted at protests from other quarters. Had any scandal been excited, surely some trace of it would have been found either in the letters of Machiavelli or in those addressed to him! Surely, too, Leo X. would scarcely have sought his advice

¹ Several notices were collected in Reinhard's "Theatrum prudentia elegantioris" (p. 37 and fol.), published in 1702, and in the "Bibliotheca politico-heraldica" (pp. 38-68), published in 1706. Much is also to be found (and frequently with full and copious extracts from the authors quoted) in Joh. Frider. Christii, "De Nicolao Machiavello libri tres" (Lipsiae et Halae Magdeb., 1731), and also in the great edition of Machiavelli's works published in Florence, 1782, and in the "Elogio di Niccolò Machiavelli," written by Giovan Battista Baldelli, published in London, 1794. Many writers have borrowed from these authors without acknowledgment. We have already mentioned Mohl's excellent work, "Die Machiavelli Literatur."

² This letter has been frequently published, and is to be found in the copy of "Il Principe," preserved in the Laurentian Library in Florence, shelf xlv. cod. 32. This and other ancient copies have been already cited by us.

on questions of general policy and the condition of Florence ; nor Clement VII. have obtained him the commission to write the "Storia," and employed him later, as we are about to see, in offices of considerable importance !

There is also another fact confirming this opinion, and showing that the "Prince" was very well known at that time. A certain Agostino Nifo di Sessa, a philosopher of slight ability, but of much repute in his day, was teaching in Pisa during the college terms of 1521-22, and had taught there for some years. In 1523 this man brought out at Naples a book entitled "De Regnandi Peritia," that was merely a bad imitation, and often a literal Latin rendering, of the "Principe."¹ But, having suppressed the last chapter of the original work, and added a few others of no value on what he was pleased to style "honest modes of government," full of the usual commonplaces on the virtues of a good sovereign, he considered that he had completed and corrected the "Principe." This bad copy he dedicated to Charles V. as his own original work, stating that it contained a brief exposition of the acts of tyrants and monarchs, on the same principle on which medical books treat of poisons and their antidotes. The volume was much applauded by the Neapolitan *literati*,² but the plagiarism remained unnoticed to our own day, and was first detected in 1876³ by Mons. Nourrisson of the French Institute.

¹ Augustini Nifi, Medices, philosophi suessani, "De Regnandi Peritia." The book was completed at Sessa in 1522, dedicated to Charles V., and printed at Naples in 1523, aedibus Catharinae de Sylvestre.

² It was published together with a collection of letters and epigrams. One of these states that the book contains :

"Quid lactos faciat populos urbesque bestas,
Quid regem similem reddat in orbe Deo."

A letter of Pietro Gravina styles it "aureum quidem et vere regium." And he adds that as Alexander kept the Iliad beside him, "sic tuum hoc opus in anquottissimo Cæsaris nostri pectore perpetuo reponendum putem." To this letter Gravina also adds some Latin verses to the effect that the small and precious volume should become the faithful Achates of kings.

³ See chapters xii. xiii. and xiv. of his work entitled "Machiavel," Paris, Didier, 1875. And Professor Settembrini afterwards called attention to this plagiarism in his "Lezioni di Letteratura Italiana." More recently Professor Francesco Fiorentino has treated of the same subject, arrived at the same conclusion, and added some notice of the life of Nifo in his essay: "Del Principe del Machiavelli e di un libro di Agostino Nifo," in the "Giornale Napoletano di Filosofia e Lettere, scienze morali e politiche," New Series, anno 1, vol. i. No. 1. Naples, Morano, 1879. Neither Settembrini nor Fiorentino seem to have been

Its prolonged impunity may be attributed, as this gentleman justly observes, partly to the slight importance attaching to Nifo's works, and partly to the fact that at that time the maxims borrowed from the "Prince" were held in more general acceptance than is usually believed. We would also suggest as another reason the fact of Agostino Nifo having tried by means of his concluding chapters to attenuate the effect possibly produced upon his readers by certain too audacious sentences; and while this attempt proves that he had failed to seize the true meaning of the book, it also proves that some doubt as to that meaning was already, even if vaguely, afloat. Nifo, after borrowing from Machiavelli, doubtless thought that he had remedied everything and almost composed a new work, by following up the theories of the original author by others of his own, leading to totally opposed and *healthier* conclusions.

In 1531 Blado printed the "Discourses" in Rome, and in the following year the "Prince," "cum gratia et privilegio of Clement VII. and other princes." By that time, however, the book had aroused dispute in Florence, for we find that Bernardo di Giunta, on producing another edition of the "Prince" in the same year, dedicated it to Monsignor Gaddi, praying him to defend the book "against all who, on account of its subject, daily attack it so furiously, unaware in their ignorance that those who touch medicine likewise impart a knowledge of poisons, in order that we may learn how to protect ourselves against them."¹ In a short time a rapid and radical change had taken place in the political condition and public opinion of Florence. After the siege, beginning acquainted with the work of Mons. Nourrisson. The latter suggests the following explanation of the reasons for which the plagiarism escaped the notice of contemporaries, and of so many after generations. "C'est que manifestement à leurs yeux, en dépit de toutes les différences qui séparent Machiavel et Niphus, cette disparate n'existait pas; c'est que manifestement encore, loin qu'il y eût pour eux quoi que soit d'abominablement inouï dans de pareilles doctrines, ils ne devaient y voir que la monnaie courante de l'opinion commune, ou la théorie presque banale des pratiques accoutumées. . . . En définitive Machiavel n'a fait qu'enseigner en maître ce que Niphus pensait lui-même, ce que pensaient à peu-près tous les politiques de l'époque à la quelle l'un et l'autre appartiennent" (Nourrisson, "Machiavel," pp. 230-31). But Nifo added the chapters by which he pretended to complete Machiavelli's work, uniting, as he says, the antidote to the poison. These few chapters form a fifth book, joined to the four in which the philosopher of Sessa had divided his mutilated translation of the "Principe."

¹ Blado's edition, as well as those brought out by Giunta at different periods are described in Garbba's work, and in the pamphlet entitled "Quarto Centenario di Niccolò Machiavelli" (Florence. Successori Le Monnier, 1869).

in 1529, the Medici had been forcibly reinstated, no longer as the timid protectors of an ephemeral republic, but as tyrants thirsting for revenge. Persecution had begun, accompanied by sentences of exile and death. Accordingly, although in the days of Lorenzo and Giuliano no one had blamed Machiavelli for his desire to serve the Medici, nor had the "Prince" given rise to suspicion or calumny, now different judgments were formed both of the book and its author. Why should a republican have sought to serve the family of those who had always been the tyrants of the country? What could have been his object in offering advice to Lorenzo, by nature a cruel and despotic man, on the method of maintaining princely power and tyranny? Thus the old spite and enmity excited by Machiavelli's pungent intellect reawakened in full force. And it is a proof of the substantial change a few years had brought about in the mode of regarding and judging political matters, that even the men who sought to defend him had now recourse to arguments which had occurred to none at an earlier date. It was said that if his book really taught princes how to become tyrants it also taught the people how to put an end to them. It was added that he had only addressed Lorenzo in this fashion, hoping that the prince by following his advice would the sooner precipitate his own overthrow. It was even pretended that Machiavelli had taken this line of defence in reply to accusing or questioning friends.¹ But, during his lifetime, there

¹ Cardinal Reginald Pole, a great adversary of Machiavelli, was one of the first to speak of this in his "Apologia ad Carolum V. Cæsarem, super libro de Unitate," Brixiae, 1744, tom. i. p. 152. He says that in the year 1534, that is, hardly seven years after the death of Machiavelli, he heard the excuses alleged by his friends on the subject of his book "Il Principe," and especially regarding his dictum that it was better to govern by fear than love. "Illi responderunt idem quod dicebant ab ipso Machiavello, cum idem illi aliquando opponeretur, fuisse responsum: se non solum quidem iudicium suum in illo libro fuisse sequutum, sed illius ad quem scriberet, quem cum sciret tyrannica natura fuisse; ea inseruit quæ non potuerunt tali nature non maxime arridere; eadem tamen si exercent, se idem indicare quod reliqui omnes, quicumque de Regis vel Principis viri institutione scripserant et experientia docet, breve eius imperium futurum; id quod maxime exoptabat, cum intus odio flagraret illius principis ad quem scriberet: neque aliud spectasse in eo libro quam, scribendi ad tyrannum in quæ tyranno placent, eum sua sponte ruentem præcipitem si posset dare." Matteo Toscano in his "Peplus Italiæ" (Parisiis, 1578), at p. 52, says: "Sed juvat commemorare quid ipse responderit se eo nomine arguentibus. Ideo enim impiis præceptis a se imbutos principes affirmavit, ut qui tum Italiani tyrannice vexabant, sua institutione deteriores redditi, eo celerius scelerum suorum poenus penderent. Fore enim ut cum se penitus vitiis immerissent, otatim meritam numinis iram experirentur." It should be remembered that neither Pole nor Toscano was a contemporary of Machiavelli.

is neither trace nor record of anything of this kind ; and besides it is irrelevant to the intentions he really entertained, and frankly declared in writing the "Prince."

Had due consideration been given to this great and rapid change of public opinion in Florence, less weight would have been ascribed by certain writers to a letter from Busini to Benedetto Varchi. In this the writer, while acknowledging that Machiavelli "loved liberty to an extraordinary degree," added that all hated him on account of the "Prince": "The wealthy thought the 'Principe' a document intended to teach the Duke how to deprive them of their property, the poor, to deprive them of their liberty. The Piagnoni regarded him as a heretic, the good as a scoundrel, the bad as one more depraved and crafty than themselves, so that every one hated him."¹ And Varchi, who had no liking for Machiavelli, repeated the same charges in his history.² But Busini's letter was written in 1549, that is to say twenty-two years after Machiavelli's death, and about nineteen after the restoration of the Medici ; while Varchi's history was written still later and at the command of Duke Cosimo. By that time everything was changed, not only in Florence, but throughout Italy and Europe. The republic was for ever extinguished, the absolute rule of the Medici established, and nearly the whole of Italy crushed under foreign sway. The Reformation had reawakened religious feeling in Germany, and driven the Catholic Church to seek renovation and purification by substantial change of all that had characterized it during the Renaissance. Machiavelli had accused the Church of being the ruin of Italy, the source of the world's corruption ; these and other tremendous charges could no longer be perused or received with the same indifference as by Leo X. and Clement VII. The men who were now labouring to reconstitute the authority of the Church and restore her to the supreme direction of the universal conscience and of the political conduct of sovereigns, naturally regarded as a foe to be fought and trampled under foot the man who had spoken of the Church with so much contempt, and tried to abase her before the State by treating religion merely as a means for increasing the strength of the State. And thus it came about that Machiavelli was suddenly,

¹ "Lettere di G. B. Busini and Benedetto Varchi," edited by Gaetano Milanesi, Florence, Le Monnier, 1861. Letter IX., dated Rome, January 23, 1549, p. 84.

² Varchi, "Storie Fiorentine," Florence, 1843, brought out at the expense of the Society for the publication of Nardi and Varchi, vol. i. bk. iv. p. 266 and fol.

as it were, surrounded by enemies, and exposed to the cross fire of their guns. The Florentine exiles could not forgive him for having implored the favour of the Medici and given advice to Lorenzo; the adherents of the new Duke could not pardon his republican sentiments; the Protestants were scandalized by his religious indifferentism and by the terms he had applied to Christianity; and the Catholic Church regarded him as a monster to be crushed.

In fact, his first real assailants were Churchmen. Cardinal Reginald Pole opened the attack in his "Apologia,"¹ by asserting that the works of Machiavelli were written by the hand of the evil one; that he had aimed at the destroyal of those to whom he offered advice, and that his life must have been no less bad and detestable than his writings. The Bishop of Cosenza, Caterino Politi,² and the Portuguese Bishop Osorio,³ followed up the assault and reiterated the same insults. But the regular war against him was undertaken by the Jesuits, who at that time, labouring with their whole strength towards the subjection of the State to the Church, and thinking all means justifiable that might forward this end, were the declared enemies of the man who had striven for the independence of the State. They began by having him burnt in effigy at Ingolstadt,⁴ and in 1559 they induced Paul IV. to place his works in the Index, by a decree confirmed in 1564 by the Council of Trent.⁵ Possevino, the promoter of all this, was

¹ Quoted before.

² "De Libris a Christiano Detestandis." Romæ, 1522.

³ "De Nobilitate Christiana," libri iii. Florentiæ, 1552.

⁴ This was the inscription affixed to the effigy: "Quoniam fuit homo vafer ac subdolos, diabolicarum cogitationum faber optimus, cacodæmonis auxiliator." See, among other authorities, Ugo Foscolo's "Prose Letterarie," Florence, Le Monnier, 1850, vol. ii. p. 452. Foscolo, too, quotes the names of many of the antagonists and supporters of Machiavelli.

⁵ Apostolo Zeno, "Annotazioni al Fontanini," part ii. p. 14; Ginguéné, "Histoire Littéraire d'Italie," vol. viii. p. 72 (Paris, 1819); Nourrisson, "Machiavel," p. 5. Later, in the wish of showing some indulgence, the Commission of the Index Expurgatorius suggested to Giuliano dei Ricci and Niccolò Machiavelli, the grandson of the Florentine Secretary, that they should bring out an expurgated edition of the "Opere," not only expunging everything that might be opposed to the Church, but even the name of the author. They accepted the proposal, and in 1573 presented the work complete. But when the cardinals charged with the revisal of the Index refused to be satisfied with the omission of Machiavelli's name and desired that it should be replaced by another, the Secretary's descendants refused to accept the humiliating conditions, and the subject was dropped. See Ginguéné, *op. cit.*, p. 75 and fol.; Nourrisson, *op. cit.*, p. 7. We have in our possession a volume of Machiavelli's "Storie" (Florence, 1551), corrected by his

likewise one of the first and most ferocious of Machiavelli's assailants. He did not deny his talent, but denied that he had any religious and moral feeling, or any true knowledge of the world. Machiavelli's counsels, he said, would lead to the total ruin of all who followed them. The criticism, however, was of a kind to plainly show that Possevino had not even read the "Prince," for, amongst other things, he supposed it to be divided in several books.¹ In short, it was a party war that was then carried on against Machiavelli. To his adversaries he seemed a species of myth representing the opposition of the State to the supremacy of the Church, and was held to be the author of the so-called *State reason* (*ragione dei Stato*), an expression that he had neither uttered nor written. It was necessary to prove in opposition to him, that whoever, whether prince or private citizen, refused to be guided by the Church and refused submission to her authority, was an enemy to God and the human race. For this end all weapons might fairly be used.

And that such was really the end of these writers is proved clearly enough by their own words. The Jesuit Ribadeneira published various works in defence "of the real and not simulated virtues of princes" directed against Machiavelli. In one of these² the author, addressing himself to the hereditary Prince of Spain, who was about to succeed to Philip II., tells him that "the hell fires of politicians and Machiavellians are spreading on all sides and threatening to consume the whole world." He therefore advises the Prince to follow the example of Ferdinand of Castile, who was not satisfied with having heretics condemned to death, but when they were sent to the stake, went in person to aid in kindling the sacrificial pile. "He who doeth not in this," he goes on to say, "rushes to certain destruction. In fact, Henry III. of France, who, instead of regulating his conduct by the law of

grandsons, from which the author's name and all expressions hostile to the Roman Church have been expunged. At the end of the volume are the following words in the same handwriting as the erasures and alterations: "This book consists of 194 sheets, the Histories of Niccolò Machiavelli, revised first by Niccolò Machiavelli and Giulia dei Ricci, and secondly by the theologian of the most illustrious Cardinal Alessandrino, by order of his superiors."

¹ Possevinus, A., "De N. Machiavelli, &c., Quibusdam Scriptis." Romæ, 1592. This was afterwards republished by the author in his "Bibliotheca Selecta." It treats of Machiavelli and his adversaries.

² "De Religione et Virtutibus Principis Christiani adversus Machiavellum," libri ii. Madrid, 1597.

the Almighty, took the advice of politicians and Machiavellians, was doomed, by the just judgment of God, to die by the hand of a poor, simple, and pious young monk of a wound dealt him with a small knife in his own room."¹ The Oratorian friar, Bozio da Gubbio, attacked Machiavelli by order of Innocent IX., and while making use of far more temperate language, equally gave it to be understood that his final aim also was to re-establish over republics and princedoms the supremacy of the papal rights of Gregorius VII. and Boniface VIII.² And so the fight went on down to the "Machiavellism Beheaded,"³ of the Spanish Jesuit Clementi, and the "Essay on the Foolishness of Niccolò Machiavelli,"⁴ by the Italian Jesuit Lucchesini, which booksellers persisted in styling "The Foolishness of Father Lucchesini," undoubtedly the most suitable title it could bear.

In the pages of Cristio and Mohl the inquiring reader will also find many notices of other writers of this description. All, however, have the same mode of criticism, are equally blinded by the same party spirit, and equally valueless. All follow the plan of isolating the maxims of Machiavelli from the conditions that gave them birth, treating and judging of political maxims as though they were moral precepts, and thus altering their meaning so that they can no longer be understood. It is certainly quite allowable to discuss and to combat the value of the words of a writer who says that in politics and diplomacy it is sometimes permitted to speak falsely; that in warfare it is praiseworthy to hoodwink your adversary; that in a disorganized State it is lawful to use force, violence, and even deceit to re-establish it in its normal conditions; that it is the duty of a prince, even when he has no belief in it, to respect and uphold the religion of his people. But when, instead of discussing these axioms, the critic charges the writer with having asserted in general terms that it is re-

¹ This letter, also given by Cristio (chapter xiii.), is to be found in the Italian edition of Ribadeneira's work, but was omitted from the Latin version. See, too, the other works by the same author: "De Simulatione Virtutum Fugienda."

² The titles of these works are sufficiently eloquent: "De imperio virtutis, sive imperia pendere a veris virtutibus, non a simulatis, lib. ii., adversus Machiavellum," Coloniae, 1594; "De robore bellico, diuturnis et amplis Catholicorum regnis, bk. i., adversus Machiavellum," Coloniae, 1594; "De Italæ statu antiquo et novo, lib. iv., adversus Machiavellum," Coloniae, 1595; "De ruinis gentium ac regnorum, adversus impios politicos, lib. viii," Coloniae, 1598.

³ "Machiavellismo Degollato," published in Alcalá, 1637.

⁴ "Saggio della Sciocchezza di Niccolò Machiavelli," published in Rome, 1697.

quisite to lie, to deceive, to be cruel, and to feign belief in a religion that you despise, there is no possibility of any real discussion, and the critic gains an easy victory over the monster that only exists in his own imagination. Such was the war carried on from many quarters, and against Machiavelli, and to a certain degree successfully carried on, since it caused him to be held by many an enemy of all morality, religion, and justice.

Nevertheless, a curious circumstance marked the course of this easy and successful crusade. The editions and translations of the "Prince" continued to multiply, and the book made great progress in the world. It is known that Charles V. carefully studied it, that his son and his courtiers perused it. It is known that Catherine dei Medici introduced it in France, that Henry III. and Henry IV. had it on their persons when murdered, that Richelieu¹ thought highly of it, and that it was studied at the English court.² Sixtus V. made a summary of it in his own handwriting. Statesmen devoured Machiavelli with avidity, for they found him the only writer speaking the language of reality, and offering counsels of practical utility for the general conduct of great political questions. All those who, in one way or the other, and whether consciously or unconsciously were labouring for the firm establishment and lasting independence of the new State, perceived that this State was being really built up on the ruins of the Middle Ages, and solely by the efforts of such rulers as Machiavelli had described. And all were forced to acknowledge the magnitude of his genius, for in him alone was to be found the true explanation, and, to a certain degree, the historic justification of the realities amid which they were living. And so it came about that the writer's great qualities; the continual study of his works by statesmen of the highest renown, and their explicitly declared admiration for him; the perfect concordance between his counsels and the deeds of the foremost of these

¹ At Richelieu's command a vigorous "Apology of Machiavelli" was written by Louis Machon, Archdeacon of Toul, in Lorraine. But, only appearing after the Cardinal's decease, it remained long unnoticed. It is a systematic defence of the leading maxims of the "Prince" and the "Discourses," and its remarkable fire and eloquence caused some to attribute it to Pascal. Throughout the religious wars, the "Prince" exercised an extraordinary influence in France.

² See Reiffenberg, "Particularités inédites, sur Charles V.," in the "Mémoires de l'Académie Royale de Bruxelles," vol. viii. See also Leo's preface to his German translation of Machiavelli's Letters, containing some just remarks upon this head, especially at pp. 7 and 8. We shall also quote later the words of Gentillet.

statesmen—ended by converting many to the belief that all that was then going on in the world was the consequence of the doctrines expounded in the "Prince." And this naturally and speedily roused against Machiavelli a series of enemies no less implacable and even more formidable than those who had gone before.

When the power of the throne was assured in Europe, and the unity of the State consolidated, then began the struggle of those desiring to curb the growth of despotism, and preserve within the monarchy both political liberty and freedom of conscience. In the "Discourses" Machiavelli had touched upon the question of political liberty, but had always avoided the far more modern problem of freedom of conscience, while in the "Prince" he had left both these questions aside. Hence, in the eyes of those who, whether sincerely or insincerely, judged him only by the "Prince," he appeared as the supporter of despotism, and was accordingly hated by all who were beginning to cry out for liberty. The next to enter the arena were Huguenot writers engaged in battling for liberty of conscience against the French crown, to whom Machiavelli was additionally odious as a lukewarm Christian, never treating of religion save from the political point of view.

The first of these to come forward was Innocent Gentillet, who, attributing the massacre of St. Bartholomew to the doctrines of the "Prince," and writing under the impulse of this feeling, assaulted Machiavelli most pitilessly, and styled him *ce chien impur*. Although his aim was totally different from, and, indeed, totally opposed to, that of the Jesuits, yet he practically pursued the same line of criticism: that is to say, by reducing Machiavelli's special maxims to maxims of morality in general, he found it easy to charge him with immorality and iniquity. He even denied his talent. His system of politics, he said, would never attain the proposed object. Machiavelli was only acquainted with the small duodecimo Italian States, and hence had no real knowledge of history and the world. *De jugement naturel, ferme et solide, Machiavel n'en avait point.*¹ Yet this very superficial and hack-

¹ Gentillet, T., "Discours sur les moyens de bien gouverner et maintenir en bonne paix un royaume . . . contre N. Machiavel le Florentin." Lausanne, 1576. The German version of this work, of which the second edition appeared in 1583, was entitled "Anti-Machiavellus," the Latin translation: "Commentariorum de regus et quovis principatu rite ac tranquillè administrando, libri iii 1576." The diversity of titles has sometimes led to the mistaken belief that these were different works. We quote the following lines from the dedication and preface to the first book of the Latin edition, as specimens of Gentillet's rancour against

neyed criticism made its mark because it met a new want of the times. It repeated old assertions, but with an opposite aim ; inasmuch as it spoke in defence of religious liberty, instead of theocratic despotism. As a weapon in a righteous cause, Gentillet's book was imitated and copied by many writers, and thus both Jesuits and Protestants, upholders of despotism and friends of liberty, attacked Machiavelli with the same arms.

His first adversary of really superior ability was Giovanni Bodino, the famous author of the work "*De Republica*," in which Machiavelli was the continual butt of invective. Bodino was no Protestant ; but while influenced on the one hand by the spirit of the Reformation, on the other he was tied to the Middle Ages ; he wavered between the historical, scholastic, and theological methods ; between experience, history, and the occult sciences, and by means of the latter sometimes found a pretended explanation of political revolutions. He proposed to accomplish that which Machiavelli had declared useless and puerile—namely, the construction of the State *à priori* ; investigation of that which men should do, rather than that which they actually do ; clinging to his theories, which he believed to be based upon reason, even when they were not in agreement with history. It was his mission, he thought, to inaugurate a system of politics founded upon Christian morality, to render the sovereign a model of virtue. With these ideas, his opposition to Machiavelli was only natural ; and, in fact, he perpetually attacks "this wretched man who has become the fashion among courtiers, and makes open boast of his atheism. All really capable of reasoning upon State affairs must allow that Machiavelli never penetrated the depths of political science, which does not consist in those tricks of tyranny such as he sought out in every corner of Italy. His "*Principe*" lauds to the skies, and selects as a model ruler,

Machiavelli, and because they partly show the causes of this rancour. "*Sathanam ut pestiferum illudinde usque ab Italia virus spargeret instrumentum in Galliis peridoneum nactum fuisse, Reginam Matrem (Catharinam Mediceam) quæ Machiavelli civis sui scripta in tantum honorem et dignitatem adduxerit, ut nemo eo tempore in aula gallica isti Medæ acceptus esset quin Machiavellum italice, gallice legeret, teneret, edisceret, quin ejus præcepta ut Apollinis oracula in mores et in negotia transferret.*" And at another place : "*Ab excessu Henrici II., regis Galliam peregrinis arbitriis sive placitis ac præceptis Machiavelli regi et agitari coeptam. . . . Neminem in Gallia adeo hospitem esse ut nesciat Machiavelli libros eo tempore a quindecim annis hæc minus assidue aulicorum manibus teri suevisse, quam breviarium a sacrificis.*" See also Christii, "*De Nicolao Machiavello*," &c., which cites these fragments at p. 33, and gives others of the same sort farther on.

the most rascally son of a priest that the world ever knew, and who, his craft notwithstanding, came to the shameful end due to so great a scoundrel. And such has always been the fate of all princes following his example and obeying the precepts of Machiavelli, whose Republic was founded upon impiety and injustice."¹

In the same rank with Bodino may be placed Tommaso Campanella, a philosopher of great power, who conspired against the Spanish domination in Calabria, and heroically endured many years of confinement and most prolonged and cruel torture. He, too, cannot mention Machiavelli without virulently attacking him. Campanella was a Dominican friar, an enemy of heretics, and yearning to extirpate them. He was the author of that Utopian dream, the "City of the Sun," and of two other flights of fancy, the "Monarchy of Spain" and the "Monarchy of the Messiah," in the first of which he upheld the universal dominion of Spain, and subordinated it in the second to the universal Church. Accordingly, it is easy to understand Campanella's detestation of Machiavelli, and why he always alluded to him as that most wicked man, inventor of the "State reason" that consists in substituting the interests of the Prince for those of the people, and pursues a policy of egotism instead of relying upon pure justice by which universal and eternal reason is kept in view.²

In this way the Machiavelli question had come to be regarded as a case of conscience alike by Protestants and Catholics, by

¹ Bodino wrote his "Repubblica" in French, and afterwards, in 1584, translated it into Latin, with various additions. Both the French edition of 1593 and the Latin edition of 1591 may therefore be consulted. He also wrote a work entitled, "Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem."

In the opinion of Lermnier, "De Republica" is "le début de la science politique dans l'Europe moderne, ébauché d'une raison ferme, mais incertaine dans ses voies, qui flotte tour à tour entre les théories *à priori* et la méthode d'observation, entre la République de Platon et la Politique d'Aristote, où l'érudition étouffe souvent la pensée, où l'esprit de l'auteur en voulant monter dans le monde des idées et des systèmes s'abat presque toujours dans son vol impuissant sans méthode, sans lumière; mais cependant témoignage irrécusable de vigueur et de génie, monument du seizième siècle," &c. (Lermnier, "Introduction général à l'histoire du droit," Bruxelles, 1836, p. 29, 30.) See also "J. Bodin et son temps, tableau des théories politiques et des idées économiques au seizième siècle, par Henri Boudrillart," Paris, Guillaumin, 1853. This work contains a very minute examination and summary of Bodino's works.

² See "Aforismi Politici," 28, 29, 35. "Opere dei T. Campanella," selected, arranged, and annotated by A. D'Ancona. Turin, Pomba, 1854, vol. ii. pp. 16, 17.

philosophers and theologians. Many felt justified in attacking him, without even the preliminary of reading his works. He was the man of sin, the heretic, the foul dog, the atheist, leading society and all followers to destruction. And although this mode of criticism had no shadow of scientific value, it continued to obtain adherents down to our own day. We may quote one of the last and more recent examples. Mons Barthélemy Saint Hilaire, in the preface to his fine translation of the "Politics of Aristotle,"¹ declares himself a partisan of Plato, whose politics were based upon morality, and condemns Aristotle for trying on the contrary to base them on facts and upon history, for which he claimed the dignity of a method. Polybius followed the same track, reaching the point of empiricism, and preparing the ground for Machiavelli, who deserves to be the object of universal opprobrium. This writer's chosen models, Alexander VI. and Cæsar Borgia, are monsters, and he unhesitatingly approves of perjury, poisoning, and assassination. *Pour peindre d'un mot toute cette politique, c'est le génie appliqué à la scélératesse.* The learned writer then goes on to commend Machiavelli's style as beyond all praise, and says that if in his works the word *succès* could be replaced by *le bien* there would then be much to learn from them concerning public affairs. He concludes by saying, "In short, the historic method that in Aristotle's pages led to some harmful results, and was exaggerated by Polybius, becomes totally unrestrained and shameless in the works of Machiavelli. What he chiefly lacks are general ideas. Besides, whatever his merits may be, his system of politics is for ever dishonoured. And this is owed to two causes: his perversity of heart and the badness of his method, which he had not even invented, but only carried to extremes."² But a writer's character has never been, nor ever will be, an adequate criterion for the explanation and judgment of his scientific system. Does the immoral character of Bacon, of Verulam, entail condemnation of his philosophy? And as regards the question of method, Barthélemy Saint Hilaire is altogether astray; it being but too plain that only the Aristotelian, and not the Platonic, method was destined to succeed in creating the science of politics, which, unless based upon experience and history, remains suspended between heaven and earth. Here, therefore, we find a repetition of old and even more

¹ Barthélemy Saint Hilaire, "Politique d'Aristote, traduite en Français," Paris, 1848.

² Ibid., "Politique d'Aristote," &c., Préface, p. cxxvi and fol.

untenable charges, rendering the learned Frenchman no less unjust to Aristotle than to Machiavelli.

But a still worse fate had befallen the latter. So far as we have seen his only supporters had been a few sovereigns or their ministers. Before long even these turned against him. With the advance of the seventeenth century the political conditions of Europe underwent a rapid change, and the position of the sovereign in his own State became radically different from his position during the Renaissance. It was no longer a question of wresting power from a feudalism that was already crushed, nor from petty republics and local governments that were already swept away, for the sovereign's power was no longer tottering and uncertain, but firmly secured to the reigning dynasties. In every State a new people had arisen, and sovereigns felt the need of closer union with their people in order to obtain its co-operation in their wars with fellow potentates, and likewise to derive strength from its prosperity, from its moral, civil, and industrial increment. Thus was prepared the way for the so-called enlightened and reforming princes of the eighteenth century. These princes felt the duty of being the leaders, guides, and representatives of their people, the supporters and promoters of its true interests, and neither could nor would longer recognize the "Prince" as their prototype. This ruler, seemingly confounding the State with his own person, solely concerned with the consolidation of his own power and with the moulding of his people into the shape most pleasing and convenient to himself, was now regarded as a negation of the true and just political system erected for the good of the masses, according to the rules of the new philosophy. Thus, even kings and their ministers were finally driven into the ranks of Machiavelli's foes.

There is a French translation of the "Prince," printed at Amsterdam in 1683, with marginal notes from the hand of Christina, ex-Queen of Sweden. These hitherto unpublished notes cannot fail to be read with the most eager attention. They are written in very Swedish French, by a cultivated and able woman, once at the head of a powerful State and a brave nation ; a woman whose life was full of the strangest vicissitudes, who resigned her crown and then forsook the religion of her forefathers to become a Catholic ; who was not devoid of political capacity, and troubled by few scruples ; who, after her descent from the throne, stained her hands in the blood of the man she had

loved, and ended her life in Rome in the society of artists and the study of Machiavelli's "Prince." But the only conclusion to be drawn from the perusal of these notes is that the Queen lived during a period of transition, and that her mind wavered between an admiration for Machiavelli, equal to that of Charles V., and the aversion soon to be conceived for him by princes bent upon reform. She undoubtedly admired Machiavelli, for she continually wrote on the margin of the book: "*Que cela est bien dit ! Que ceci est beau et vra ! Vérité incontestable ! Maxime admirable !*" Other maxims, however, she often rejected with indignation. Where Machiavelli remarks that he who seeks to be honest among many bad men procures his own destruction, she exclaims: "What does that matter? No interest can be greater than that of keeping your word." And at another point: "I doubt whether the empire of the world were worth so great a price." But then she gradually falls back into agreement with Machiavelli, and when he narrates the murders committed in Romagna by Cæsar Borgia, she allows that they were crimes, but coldly adds: "There are other nobler and safer ways of ridding ourselves of our enemies." She admits that force and arms are the only means unfailingly successful in politics, and where Machiavelli praises in general terms Cæsar Borgia's capacity and daring, she immediately notes: "Grand qualities these! I am well assured of that." She also shows much admiration for Alexander VI., "who was a great Pope, whatever may be said of him." And this oscillation of opinion goes on to the end. She nobly declares: "There is no greatness worthy of purchase at the cost of crime, we can be neither great nor happy in this fashion, and the bad can rarely enjoy their prosperity." But when *à propos* to Cæsar Borgia, Machiavelli speaks of cruelties being worthy of praise or blame accordingly as they are well or ill employed, then the ex-Queen is convinced, and notes in the margin: "*Cela n'est pas mal dit.*" And shortly after she again allows that, undoubtedly in politics as in surgery, "there are certain ills only to be cured by blood and fire."¹

¹ The volume annotated by Christina bears the following title, "Le Prince de Nicolas Machiavel, secretaire et citoien de Florence, traduit et commenté," par A. N. Amelot, sieur de la Houssaie. Amsterdam, Wetstein, 1683. At the end of the dedicatory letter to Lorenzo dei Medici, the date 1684 is added in manuscript, possibly by the hand of the royal annotator. Professor Ernesto Monaci, of the Roman University, has kindly allowed us free use of this volume, which belongs to him. See Appendix, document ~~xxx~~.

None of this uncertainty is to be found in the language of another sovereign of later date, and very superior to the Queen of Sweden in political capacity and character. Frederic the Great of Prussia wrote in his youth a "*Réfutation du Prince de Machiavel*," that has been published in our day in its genuine form ; but was already known through its publication by Voltaire in 1740, under the title of "*L'Antimachiavel*," and revised and corrected by him. Frederic attacks Machiavelli with characteristic energy, and, coming forward as the defender of the outraged honour of kings, says that the book of "*Il Principe*" is to be regarded as the production of a man wishing to be the teacher of thieves and assassins. Examining Machiavelli's maxims one by one, he follows the example of Possevino, Gentillet, and many others, by isolating them from surrounding conditions, and from the object determining their meaning, treats them as general and unconditional rules of conduct, and as rules of morality, and thus speedily and easily confutes them, without perceiving that in this way he does battle, not with Machiavelli, but with a personage of his own invention. He hotly defends the loyalty, justice, and honour which should be, he says, the virtues of sovereigns, and winds up with the usual conclusion that a political system like that advised in the "*Prince*" would ensure the certain ruin of all who tried to pursue it. So explicit a condemnation, pronounced by the man who was afterwards a great military and political genius, and the real founder of the Prussian monarchy and its power, unavoidably threw a great weight into the scale against Machiavelli.¹

Only the natural question was now raised—What rules of politics were followed by Frederic, those of Machiavelli or those of the "*Antimachiavelli*" ? and there could be no hesitation as to the reply. The unexpected and unjustifiable attack upon Maria Theresa ; the conquest of Silesia ; the treaties of alliance so often made and often broken without scruple and without faith, abundantly proved that in action he was one of the most faithful followers of the doctrines of the "*Prince*," that he had so fiercely

¹ "*L'Antimachiavel*" was brought out by Voltaire in 1740, without the author's name, and with the date : À la Haze, Van Duren, 1741. "*La Réfutation du Prince de Machiavel*," of which the whole of the original manuscript was found, with the exception of the second chapter, that is accordingly lost to us, was published in 1848, in vol. viii. of the great edition of the complete works of Frederic the Great, edited by Professor Preuss, and printed at the Royal Printing Office of Berlin, by order of the Prussian Government.

combated in words. His biography affords the most striking evidence that a ruler does not necessarily rush to his destruction by following the counsels of Machiavelli, but, on the contrary, may succeed in establishing the glory and greatness of his State, and win the admiration—almost the idolatry—of his people during his life and after his death. Why, then, had Frederic adopted a tone in such open contradiction with his own acts? As usual, a thousand hypotheses were started. It was said that his lofty intellect discerned good, while his natural depravity urged him to evil; it was said that his having written "*L'Antimachiavel*" was a stroke of the most consummate Machiavellism, in order to gain credit for being different from what he really was, the better to succeed in his designs when on the throne. But these subtleties were alien to his character, and are refuted by his letters, which serve rather to show us the sincerity of his indignation against Machiavelli. We believe that a far simpler explanation may be given.

Both the character and the moral and political conditions of sovereigns in their own states were, as we have already observed, considerably changed from what they had been in Machiavelli's day. That which really constitutes the historic grandeur of Frederic of Prussia, and renders him, all his sins notwithstanding, a great man and a great king, is the profound feeling that identified him with his people. On the eve of the battle of Rossbach, he wrote to his prime minister: "In case I were made prisoner, it is my will that the war should be carried on under the command of my brother as though I had never existed. He and the ministers will have to promise me on their heads not to think of conceding anything for my ransom." A man animated by this deep conviction of the duty of sacrificing himself to the greatness and glory of his people and his State, although, in pursuance of this aim, never allowing himself to be arrested by scruples of conscience, could not fail to be roused to unconquerable indignation by a writer offering as a model for his imitation the image of a prince seeking to subordinate both State and people to his personal pleasure alone. And if Frederic's judgment was faulty, that does not prevent his anger from being sincere when he said that: "Machiavelli has not understood the true nature of the sovereign, who should prefer to all things the greatness and happiness of his people. Far from being the absolute master of those who are under his rule, he is only the first of their servants, and should be

the instrument of their welfare, as they are the instrument of his glory. What then becomes of all ideas of personal ambition and despotism? It is this that razes to its foundations the book of the "Prince," and overwhelms Machiavelli with infamy. According to him, the most unjust and most atrocious actions are permissible when they have interest and ambition for their aim. Subjects are slaves, whose life and death depend from the will of the sovereign, just as the lambs of a flock, whose milk and wool are intended for the profit of their master, may all be put to the slaughter at that master's pleasure."¹

Schooled in the humanitarian philosophy of the eighteenth century, although by nature violent, ambitious, and unscrupulous, ignorant of Italian history and literature, and totally unacquainted with Machiavelli's other works, it was impossible for Frederic to comprehend the true meaning of the "Prince" evolved in the author's brain, after the likeness of those tyrants of the Renaissance, who achieved the unity of the State and the people by forcibly subjecting them to their own ambitious designs. He could neither discern nor understand, and indeed would have indignantly protested against any one who should have tried to demonstrate to him that the "Prince" of Machiavelli was the historic and necessary forerunner of the sovereign of the eighteenth century. Yet the great Prussian king himself afforded the clearest proof of the close relationship between the two personages, and none knew better than he how to derive advantage from the very maxims he condemned. In his own case he certainly thought those maxims justified by the end that he had in view, and by the inexorable necessity of practising them for the benefit of the State; but this was exactly the manner in which Machiavelli had justified them in the "Prince." As far back as the early part of the sixteenth century the Florentine had likewise discerned that the new tyranny would serve as a preparation for the new liberty, and with prophetic vision had traced the evolution of the reforming sovereign of the future from the prince of his own time. As we have seen, he frequently touched upon this idea in the "Discourses," much less frequently in the "Prince;" but when, in the final chapter of the latter work, he clearly expounded it by means of the magnificent exhortation in which the public welfare is superposed and exalted above everything else as the crowning aim

¹ "Réfutation du Prince de Machiavel," chap. i. p. 190 and fol. of the volume before quoted.

of the work, Frederic then withholds criticism and is silent, because any examination of this chapter would have driven him to the conclusion that his grounds for censure were cut from beneath him.

Granted the very limited historical and literary equipment of the great King, who of all Machiavelli's works had read only the "Prince"; granted his own views of the duties of a sovereign; granted the erroneous premises from which he started, all the rest becomes a logical and necessary consequence that need cause us no surprise. And thus, in fact, while his life was the plainest commentary and surest confirmation of many of the truths expounded in the "Prince," his "Antimachiavel" was merely a parody on them. Mohl was right in saying that Frederic's composition was "not a criticism but a misinterpretation, inasmuch as he combats a figment of his own brain, and that there is accordingly no undue severity in saying of him that his work is a schoolboy exercise upon an ill-understood theme."¹ We may add, nevertheless, that in spite of this the "Antimachiavel" is an historical document of considerable value, for while doing little honour to the writer, who failed to comprehend Machiavelli, it does great honour to the sovereign who, even in early youth, appreciated the loftiness of his own mission in the world.

It is certain that all, and particularly the so-called moral sciences, are closely connected with the society amid which they are born and developed; but, more than all the rest, political science is specially subject to this law. For with regard to this science, not only is there a continual change in the ideas, knowledge, and mode of thought of those engaged in its study, but even in the subject on which it turns, namely, human society. And as

¹ "Vielmehr ist die ganze Arbeit des Prinzen, ein grosses Missverständniss." He therefore, continues Mohl, "bekämpft nur ein selbst-geschaffenes Scheinbild. . . . Dass diese Arbeit also eine im Wesentlichen verfehlte und eine des künftigen grossen Staatsmannes, welcher sie schrieb, nicht würdig ist, unterliegt keinem Zweifel. Es ist nicht zu hart geurtheilt, wenn sie als eine Schülerarbeit über einen falsch aufgefassten Gegenstand bezeichnet wird" (Mohl, *op. cit.*, p. 553). Far more lenient is the judgment of Trendelenburg, although it leads to an almost similar conclusion. He makes a much closer examination of Frederic's essay, but shows slighter knowledge of Machiavelli's works. Besides, he was delivering an address at the festival in honour of the great king, and was therefore compelled to a more indulgent verdict upon the book. "Machiavell und Antimachiavell, Vortrag zum Gedächtniss Friederichs des Grossen gehalten am 25 Januar, 1855, in der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften," von Adolf Trendelenburg. Berlin, bei G. Bethge, 1855.

regards Machiavelli's doctrines, the fact is still more patent, for his writings may truly be said to be identified with the society and times in which he lived, and his ideas have so objective and impersonal a value as to have almost the aspect of historical events. This, too, is the reason why statesmen have judged Machiavelli so differently, according to the different conditions by which they were surrounded. Charles V. had a great admiration for the "Prince," with whom he was in sympathy; Frederic II., being in totally different political conditions, blamed its author; Napoleon I., the greatness of whose political and military genius none can deny, was again in conditions but little removed from those contemplated by Machiavelli, whom he accordingly admired. Napoleon was literally a new prince, owing everything to fortune, to his own courage and ability; a usurper evoked by historic necessity for the purpose of rescuing France from the chaos into which she had been hurled by the Revolution. Whereas the dominant feeling, the determinant characteristic of Frederic, was his identification with the State and the people in whose midst he was born, for whom it was his duty and his desire to live, and of whom he styled himself the head servant; Napoleon I., on the contrary, commanded and guided nationalities to whom he felt apparently an alien. This conviction is often admirably depicted by his own words: "Mais après tout," he said, "un homme d'État est-il fait pour être sensible? N'est-ce pas un personnage—complètement excentrique, toujours seul d'un côté, avec le monde de l'autre?"¹ And not only was his whole career, as indeed that of many of the greatest sovereigns, a continual exemplification of the theories of the "Prince," but he frequently used terms and expressed opinions and sentiments that seem to be borrowed from Machiavelli. Like the latter, he had a very bad opinion of men, and was firmly convinced that they were unfailingly and solely moved by personal interests.² He, too, held to the axiom that the conduct of the statesman should be judged by special rules entirely apart from those of private life. "The acts of the statesman, which considered individually are so often blamed by the world, form an integral part of a great work, afterwards to be admired, and by which alone they should be judged. Elevate your imagi-

¹ "Mémoires de Madame de Rémusat." Paris, Lévy, 1880. Tome 1, pp. 335-38.

² This is confirmed in almost identical words, both in the "Mémoires of Madame Rémusat," and those of Prince Metternich.

nation, look farther before you, and you will see that the personages you deem violent, cruel, and what not, are only politicians knowing how to master their passions, and expert in calculating the effect of their actions. I have shed blood and it was my duty, I may perhaps shed more, but without anger, and merely because blood-letting is one of the prescriptions of political surgery. I am the man of the State, I am the Revolution."¹ On reading this and other similar speeches of his, it is easily seen why Napoleon I. was so great an admirer of the Machiavelli so much detested by Frederic II.²

Prince Metternich, on the contrary, who was a great antagonist of Napoleon and the opposing representative of old traditions and European reaction, was also a declared adversary of Machiavelli, and speaks of him in his "Memoirs" with much contempt. It is not worth our while to examine here the few words on this subject contained in one of the notes to the Prince's "Memoirs,"³ for they are merely the usual empty and valueless commonplaces. Intent upon describing himself, not as he really was, but as he wished to be regarded by posterity, he continually insists upon the indissoluble union of morality with genuine policy and genuine diplomacy which is bound to resort to none but loyal and honest means. Starting from these principles, to which it is well known how little he adhered in reality, he makes war upon the Revolution, upon Napoleon, and upon Machiavelli, always reiterating that morality, loyalty, and justice are the only standards by which the actions of princes and peoples, and the real value of every course of policy can be accurately judged. When, however, Metternich proceeds to investigate the character of Napoleon I., and inquires whether he was intrinsically good or intrinsically bad, what reply does he make? "To a man like Napoleon," he says, "neither the one nor the other epithet can be applied in the sense usually given to these words. Absorbed in his mighty enterprise, he marched straight forwards, crushing all obstacles in his path, without being able ever to stop his chariot. He had two aspects: as a private individual, he was very homely and very easy to get on with; as a statesman, was totally without feeling. There is but one way to

¹ "Mémoires de Madame de Rémusat," *loc. cit.*

² "Je crois avoir lu quelque part que Napoléon faisoit grand cas de Guicciardini; ce qui est certain, c'est qu'il admirait sincèrement Machiavel." So writes Prince Metternich in his "Mémoires," &c. Paris, Plon, 1880, vol. i. p. 281, note.

³ See note quoted above.

judge his greatness, and that solely consists in being able to judge his work and the age that he succeeded in dominating. If this work was truly great, Napoleon I. must also be held to be great; if, on the contrary, it was ephemeral, so likewise is his glory."¹ This whole train of argument, certainly one of the best passages in Metternich's "Memoirs," is the practical negation of the theory that he asserts to have been the constant creed of his life, and that he used as a weapon against Machiavelli. For here he unconsciously concludes by recognizing the Florentine's fundamental doctrine of politics and morality being things apart.

Machiavelli, however, was not long left undefended. No sooner was independent criticism inaugurated in the sixteenth century by the new philosophy, than weighty voices were instantly raised in his favour. Justus Lipsius was one of the first to declare his belief in Machiavelli's superiority over all other writers on princely government. He only regretted that the Florentine had not led his Prince by the path of virtue and honour, but, on the contrary, too often *aberravit a regia hac via*. This admission, however, did not suffice to save him from the speedy attacks of Machiavelli's foes, who compelled him to stand upon his defence.² Soon after Lord Bacon of Verulam came forward, and, as one versed in public affairs and a promoter of experimental philosophy, he openly declared in favour of Machiavelli, saying that gratitude was owed to him and to all who, like him, had studied that which men do, instead of that which they ought to do.³ These words clearly prove that he had an accurate perception of one side, but of one side only, of Machiavelli. For although the latter examined that which men do, it was in order to discover that which they ought to do in certain given circumstances in order to succeed in their ends. On this point his works abound in counsel and precept. Hence Trajano Boccalini, writing in the same century a satirical burlesque upon Machiavelli, was right in representing him as defending himself from the sentence of death at the stake, to which he was condemned by the tribunal of Apollo, in the following terms: "I do not understand why I should be condemned when my only crime has been to describe the con-

¹ Metternich, "Mémoires," &c., vol. i. pp. 289-92.

² J. Lipsius, "Liber adversus dialogistam," p. 37, edition of 1594. See also the preface of the same to bk. vi. of his "Politicorum."

³ "Gratias agamus Machiavello et hujusmodi scriptoribus, qui aperte et indissimulanter proferunt quid homines facere soleant, non quid debeant" ("De augmentis Scientiarum," bk. vii. chap. ii.)

duct and deeds of princes in the manner narrated to us by all the histories. If they are not punished for that which they do, why should I be condemned to the flames for having described their deeds?" In consequence of this defence Machiavelli was about to be acquitted, when the fiscal advocate stated that he had been seen by night in the midst of a flock of sheep, in whose jaws he was trying to insert the teeth of dogs. Accordingly, said the advocate, it would be no longer possible to manage the flock as before by means of a single shepherd with a whistle and a whip. And thereupon Machiavelli was condemned to death.¹ The meaning of the fable is obvious.

Also in the sixteenth century, Alberigo Gentile, the celebrated author of the treatise, "*Sul diritto della guerra*," clearly perceived that Machiavelli was no mere narrator of facts, but, by means of his works, had sought and striven to promote freedom. He therefore styled him "*democratiae laudator et assertor accrimus . . . tyrannidis summe inimicus*," and added that his real object was to reveal the secrets of tyranny to the people under colour of giving instruction to princes.² And this opinion found an ever-increasing number of supporters. Rousseau said, in his "*Contrât Social*," that the "*Prince*" was a book for republicans, since, while feigning to give lessons to monarchs, it had really given them to the people.³ And Alfieri, in whom loftiness of intellect was joined with nobility of character, and who never uttered Machiavelli's name without adding the epithet *divine*, declared that "although some few maxims of tyranny are to be found scattered through the '*Prince*,' they are expounded only to make known to the people the cruelties of kings, and certainly not to teach the latter that which they have always done and will do. For we find every page of the '*Histories*' and the '*Discourses*' breathing a spirit of magnanimity, justice, and liberty. Nor is it possible

¹ Boccalini, "*Ragguagli di Parnaso*," centuria i. ragguaglio 89.

² "*De Legationibus*," bk. iv. chap. ix.

³ "En feignant de donner des leçons aux rois, il en a donné des grandes aux peuples. Le '*Prince*' de Machiavel est le livre des républicains." And he adds in a note: "Machiavel était un honnête homme et un bon citoyen; mais attaché à la maison des Médicis, il était forcé dans l'oppression de sa patrie de déguiser son amour pour la liberté. Le choix seul de son exécrable héros manifeste assez son intention secrète, et l'opposition des maximes de son livre du '*Prince*' à celles de ses '*Discours*' sur Tite-Live et de son histoire de Florence, démontre que ce profond politique n'a eu jusqu'ici que des lecteurs superficiels ou corrompus" (Rousseau, "*Œuvres*," Genève, 1782, vol. i. p. 272).

to read them without being inflamed by those sentiments. Yet Machiavelli was believed to be a teacher of tyranny, of vice, and of baseness; and so it has come about that modern Italy, past mistress in servility, has not recognized the only true political philosopher she has ever had."¹

Although these writers only spoke of Machiavelli incidentally, yet the authority of their learning and genius was far superior to that of those who had constituted themselves his accusers, and therefore of far greater weight. Yet for the sake of justice we are driven to remark that both sides, while travelling by opposite roads, fell into the same error. Machiavelli's detractors thought that, for the condemnation of his doctrines, it was sufficient to blacken his character. His defenders, on the other hand, believed that by extolling his patriotism, and proving his love of liberty, they afforded, at the same time, implicit proof of the truth and value of his doctrines. It was not yet understood that if the Machiavelli question was not a case of conscience, neither was it a controversy of patriotism and liberalism. The essential point should have been: Had he spoken truly or falsely? What was the scientific worth of his doctrines? Everything else should have been considered of secondary importance. Even if a defender of despotism, he might still have been a man of great genius, as he might have been an empty rhetorician and yet a defender of liberty. Nevertheless, this did not seem to be comprehended in the least, and for a long time, particularly in Italy, criticism pursued the same course. When national aspirations began to arise amongst us, and literature became the most efficacious means of preparing for our political redemption, then all things, criticism included, assumed patriotic tendencies and aims. Accordingly, Machiavelli the republican, enemy of the papacy, and supporter of Italian unity and independence, became the idol of many on this head alone. Foscolo, after singing his praises in the "Sepolcri" as the foe of tyrants,² extolled him in his "Prose" as the adversary of Popes and aliens, as a promoter of republican government and national independence.³ Ridolfi, in his book upon the

¹ "Del Principe e delle Lettere," bk. ii. chap. ix.

² "Io, quando il monumento
Vidi, ove posa il corpo di quel grande,
Che, temprando lo scettro ai regnatori,
Gli allor ne sfronda ed alle genti svela,
Di che lacrime grondi e di che sangue," &c.

³ Foscolo, "Prose letterarie," Firenze, Le Monnier, 1850, vol. ii. p. 433.

"Prince,"¹ thought to exonerate Machiavelli from every charge by remarking that he had sought to free his country from foreign rule, and that in such cause all means were lawful. Therefore our Italian critics of this school continued for some time to publish works inspired by patriotic sentiments, showing much study of Machiavelli, and sincere admiration for him ; but which—excepting one essay by Zambelli, very noteworthy from other points of view, and that will be referred to farther on—only reiterated with more or less eloquence the same general and indefinite ideas.

Criticism of an almost similar sort, if with greater parade of learning, made its way even into Germany. When the aspirations of that country towards national unity under the Prussian rule were gaining vigour, and public attention was directed to the examination of the real political conditions of the country, men began to have a more exact idea of the practical difficulties to be encountered, and of the only means by which they could be overcome, and finally comprehending the sound worth of Machiavelli's maxims, studied and admired him far more than they had ever done before. His invocation to a princely deliverer to unite the country and free it from foreign rule, and his enmity towards the Pope, were reasons which, even as they increased his favour in Italy when that country wished to overthrow the temporal power of the Pope, and, with Piedmont at her head, drive out all foreign oppressors, also raised his popularity in Protestant Germany when that country was struggling for consolidation in no very different way. This explains the great number of German books, pamphlets, essays, reviews, and newspapers which in recent time, when venting patriotic sentiments have alluded to Machiavelli with genuine enthusiasm. Here is one of the many examples which might be cited. In "A Defence of Machiavellism," by Herr Bollman, published in 1858, the author starts by remarking that political morality is profoundly different from private morality ; that the one has hardly any relation with the other, and that, amid the wickedness of mankind and the miseries of the fatherland, it would be madness to try to save the country by means of lofty and loyal conduct : that firmness of will and clearness of mind are needed, apart from all sentimentality. Machiavelli had the grand merit of frankly expounding these truths. He believed that Cæsar Borgia possessed the requisite qualities, and therefore

¹ A. Ridolfi, "Pensieri intorno allo scopo di N. Machiavelli, nel libro del Principe." Milan, 1810.

proposed him as a model. And then, to show that this defence was not derived from any fantastic and theoretical admiration for a foreigner, Bollman addresses himself to Germany, endeavouring to prove that none of her political parties could have saved her had not a royal armed reformer arisen in Prussia of the exact kind described by Machiavelli. This prince, he says, may follow in his internal policy the dictates of justice and morality ; but in foreign conflict he must adopt the counsels of Machiavelli, must think neither of gentleness nor cruelty, neither of faith, nor honour, nor shame, but solely of the good of the fatherland. O King of the future ! when will you arise ? ¹

These writers appeared when Machiavellian studies had already made considerable progress, and therefore it frequently happened that this one or that digressed into historical and scientific considerations of various value. Yet with all the leading idea was a patriotic sentiment that, although praiseworthy, was often inopportune, and ended by endowing Machiavelli with ideas that he never conceived, or never, at least, in the entirely modern form in which they were attributed to him.

Meanwhile a more scientific method of criticism had gradually arisen, and was making slow but constant progress. For instance, Raumer and Schlegel believed that the source of Machiavelli's errors was to be discovered in the fact of his conception of the State being of too old-world and pagan a sort to include any notion of individual worth, and that its only recognized elements were intelligence and force. "In the State, according to Machiavelli," added Schlegel, "nothing is known of God Almighty and His Divine precepts ; nor is it perceived that the ills of Italy proceeded from the general corruption which had first of all to be cured." ² Matter, on the contrary, discovered the source of his errors in his abstraction of politics from morality. For in this way, he said, the rights of the people were forgotten ; and the prince sought a

¹ "Er wird, wie Machiavelli, dieser grosse italienische Staatsmann, lehrt, das Wohl des Volkes heilig halten, aber dem Auslande gegenüber weder Milde noch Grausamkeit, weder Treue noch Wortbruch, weder Ehre noch Schande, sondern nur Einheit, Grösse und Unabhängigkeit des Vaterlandes kennen. Solch' ein Fürst aber würde alle Hindernisse besiegen, er wird gross, mächtig, unwiderstehlich sein. Wann wirst Du erscheinen, König der Zukunft," &c., &c. (Karl Bollmann, "Verteidigung des Machiavellismus," p. 102. Quedlinburg, 1858.)

² F. Schlegel, "Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur," a work that has often been translated. Raumer, "Über die geschichtliche Entwicklung der Begriffe, Recht, Staat und Politik," Leipzig, 1832, p. 27.

State for his own use, with an aim independent of justice.¹ These theories were but feeble and uncertain attempts; but, at least, it was beginning to be acknowledged that the merits and demerits of the author's doctrines were to be sought, not in his character, but in his writings, and that to these must be applied the scientific standards held to be correct.

A far more recent writer, Herr Franck, turned his talent and learning in the same direction. According to him, Machiavelli, after dividing politics from morality, and examining only two forms of government—the monarchical and the republican—neither discovered, nor tried to discover, the links which may join monarchy with liberty. His errors are not derived from an evil that he never desired, but from the premises from which he logically deduced them. The various social elements—conscience, the individual—are subordinated to the unity of the State; vice and virtue considered as relative qualities to be neither esteemed nor condemned on their own merits, but only for their effects. For these reasons odium remains attached to the Florentine's name, even when unjust accusations are withdrawn. In fact, according to Franck, Machiavelli was a man of no principle, who in political affairs made no distinction between good and evil, recognized no absolute right, no inviolable duty, and subordinated the most sacred rights of humanity to reasons of State.² Leaving aside the renewal by Franck, although in a milder form, of the old personal attacks on Machiavelli's character, critics of this kind have two capital defects. They endeavour to deduce the whole of Machiavelli's doctrines from certain few ideas of great simplicity and clearness, and concentrate on these their entire attention. But Machiavelli has no rigorously systematic form; both his mind and his works are extremely complex; his doctrines composed of very varied elements, between which it is sometimes hard to discover any connecting link. And without examining them on all sides, and under all their numerous aspects, it is almost impossible to comprehend them. The separation of politics from morality is but one of the thousand questions demanding the critic's attention. Another fault of the school was that of undertaking the examination of Machiavelli's writings with little preliminary study of his

¹ Matter, "*Histoire des doctrines morales et politiques des trois derniers siècles*," vol. i. pp. 68-88. Paris and Geneva, 1836. Three vols.

² A. Franck, "*Réformateurs et Publicistes de l'Europe*," p. 287 and fol. Paris, M. Lévy, 1864.

life or his times ; thus the practical aim of his works frequently escaped them, and it was impossible to seize the true aspect of his doctrines. Certainly the "Prince" can never be understood without previous knowledge of the circumstances by which it was inspired, of the conditions in which it was written, and the practical purpose it had in view. While it is certainly true that both this work and the "Discourses" give a pagan conception of the State, yet, unless it be remembered that this conception took a new form in Italy at this time—a form peculiar to the Renaissance—and unless it be determined what this form really was, Machiavelli can never be understood.

Among these critics P. S. Mancini must also be ranked ; being a much later writer, he enlarged the boundaries of the school, but failed to avoid all its blunders. He starts by declaring his intention of examining the intrinsic value of Machiavelli's doctrines, in the belief that he is the first to make the attempt. For him also the chief question consists in the separation of politics from morality—a separation that he unreservedly condemns. But he justly adds that : Machiavelli sought to emancipate the State from the Church, and therefore separated politics from theology, religion, morality and abstract scholastic philosophy, resorting instead to the historical and experimental method.¹ Mancini urges strongly, and with reason, that Machiavelli never thought of denying virtue, justice, and liberty, but, on the contrary, admired and extolled them, as is clearly evidenced by numerous passages that are quoted and reproduced. As, however, the chief point always rests upon the separation of politics from morality, and as this is declared by Mancini to be a very grievous error, thus the quotations are of no avail to save Machiavelli from condemnation. For the Florentine's first end being to secure the independence of the State, he sought every means, whether good or bad, tending to that end. It was in this way that he became the standard bearer of the utilitarians. "In Machiavelli's hands the science of politics, left to itself and nourished in savage independence, becomes a systematic theory of means, without any presupposed rectitude of purpose."² His belief in the possibility of excluding the moral problem from the special field of politics caused him to fall into "a radical error that vitiates and corrupts his whole system, and his doctrine is thus deprived of the solid basis required

¹ Pasquale, Stanislao Mancini, "Prelezioni con un Saggio sul Machiavelli," pp. 245-46. Naples, Marghieri, 1873.

² Mancini, *op. cit.* p. 263.

for it." ¹ In this way, if his whole system is corrupt and his theories lack their necessary foundation, the intrinsic value of his doctrines is reduced to very little. Their merit and value can only exist in their method and accessories.

Besides, according to Mancini, the least original portion of Machiavelli's works is that treating of princely government, because this is borrowed from Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas.² We have already seen the incorrectness of this assertion. He then goes on to say that Machiavelli succeeded in showing that an absolute prince is forced, for the sake of self-preservation, to employ immorality and injustice as ordinary means of government; must always look to dynastic ends, instead of to the welfare of the State and the people, and that this, as a natural consequence, leads to the wisest and most peremptory condemnation of absolute monarchy.³ Unluckily, however, this indirect merit cannot be assigned to Machiavelli, for, on the contrary, he sought to show the historical necessity of despotism in certain social conditions, a necessity of which the Europe of his day furnished undeniable proofs. He was profoundly convinced that absolute monarchy alone could have the strength to unite a corrupt people and preserve it from anarchy, and explicitly says so. In this, and not in his indirect condemnation of absolutism, consists the full meaning of the "Prince," which was no plagiarism upon Aristotle, but an original product of the intellect and the times of Machiavelli; therefore in acquitting or condemning him we must steadily keep that meaning in view.

Mancini also endeavoured to trace Machiavelli's doctrine back to a few simple premises that by no means comprise it in full, but, in spite of his study of these premises, he fails to show the connection between the doctrine and the times that gave it birth. Occasionally he would seem to examine the "Prince" and the "Discourses" as though they were works of our own day. He pays no attention to the historical conditions under which they were composed, and in according due praise to Machiavelli for having separated political science from scholastic lore, he is alike oblivious of Machiavelli's precursors and of those who had worked with him for the same ends. Mancini's keen intellect could hardly have been betrayed into this error had he given closer study to preceding critics.

For some time previously authors had begun to consider

¹ Mancini, *op. cit.* p. 311. ² *Ibid.*, *op. cit.* p. 303. ³ *Ibid.*, *op. cit.* p. 317.

Machiavelli in connection with his times ; indeed, even as far back as the beginning of this century, attempts were made to that effect. Rehberg, who wrote at the time of Germany's sufferings at the hands of the French, and doubtless influenced by those events, treated of the " Prince " as of a work of vast genius, but void of any lofty ideal, and consequently taking no heed of the real welfare of the human race. Republican government having become an impossibility in Italy, Machiavelli had sought a practical remedy, by imagining a strong and powerful monarch, such as he hoped to find in one of the Medici. In this way he thought to drive the barbarians from Italy, allowing the people to help in the noble enterprise when and how it best could. In judging of his counsels it is necessary to estimate the political conditions by which they were dictated. The immorality of many of these counsels could not be repugnant to an author who was also stained by the corrupt manners of his time.¹ Almost at the same period Ginguené, in his " History of Italian Literature," endeavoured to pass a large and comprehensive judgment on the works of Machiavelli, taking account of the times in which they were composed and the practical object that they had in view.²

But these works, notwithstanding their merits as regarded novelty of research, their examination of Machiavelli from many points of view, studying both the man and his writings in connection with his time and with his purpose, failed to arrive at any satisfactory result, owing to their lack of a truly scientific method. They gave us a series of observations more or less acute and original, but always incomplete and uncertain. The first attempts towards really scientific inquiry began with the new method of historical criticism, and were originated by Ranke and Leo. These writers have bequeathed to us only a few pages upon Machiavelli ; but in them the new road is traced out. Leopold Ranke, whose extraordinary talents were evidenced in his earliest youth, and who was subsequently the founder of a new historical school in Germany, published his short study on Machiavelli, together with others upon different Italian historians of the sixteenth century, in 1824.³ In

¹ A. W. Rehberg, " Das Buch vom Fürsten von Niccolò Machiavelli übersetzt und mit Einleitung und Anmerkungen versehen." Hanover, 1810.

² " Histoire littéraire d'Italie." Paris, 1811-1823, ten vols., vol. viii. (1817) pp. 1-184.

³ " Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber," pp. 182-202. Leipzig and Berlin, 1824. We do not here quote the second edition of 1874, because it is requisite to

the "Discourses," he tells us, Machiavelli treats of Roman history and Titus Livy; but in point of fact pays but little attention to his subject, his thoughts being turned to the future of Italy, for whose aid he invokes the experience of the past. The greatness of Rome did not seem to him to have had its source in any inherent strength of the Roman people, but in certain maxims, certain axioms which he now expounds to Italians, in order to teach them how to arrive at the same greatness. Only, to ensure success another people is needed—a people endowed with strength, virtue, and a fresh education. Therefore he was always chasing the impossible, and on becoming aware of this often fell into despair; thus he was at last persuaded of the necessity for a despotic prince who would cure the general corruption by violent means. Even in his "Art of War," after mooting many plans as to the best method of supplying Italy with an army like that of ancient Rome, he ends by despairingly recurring to the dominant idea of the "Discourses," namely, that of the need of a powerful State. The maker of this State would be as Philip of Macedon, and would become the master of Italy. This idea of bringing about the unity of his country—and which forms the theme of the "Prince"—was already afloat during the Renaissance, and was frequently mentioned by writers of the period.¹ In the days of Leo X. the Medici had strong hopes of obtaining possession of the whole, or at least of the greater part, of Italy, and their friends were even more sanguine. It was during this state of things that the "Prince" was written.

Ranke next goes on to examine that which he calls the source of the "Prince," and quotes certain passages which he considers

examine Ranke's work in its original form. This, indeed, may be said to have remained unaltered since the changes afterwards made in it are of very little value.

¹ Ranke here cites the words addressed to Julius II. by the poet Flaminio:

"Dux opus est acris, populos qui cogat in unum;
Qui male concordēs iungat ad arma manus."

He also quotes Polidoro Vergilio, who, twenty years later, wrote his book, "*De Prodigis*," in London, and in dedicating it to Francesco Maria, Duke of Urbino (1st of August, 1526), expressed his hope that from that prince would proceed the regeneration of Italy. And in conclusion Ranke also quotes the words of the more recent writer Varchi, who, in speaking of the desire of the Venetians to weaken Italy in order to become her masters, had added, "And verily there will be no end to the troubles and misfortunes of Italy until they (the Venetians)—since no such benefit is to be expected from the Pope—or some prudent and fortunate prince may assume possession of her" ("*Storia Fiorentina*," vol. i. p. 117. Florence, 1843).

to be copied from Aristotle, especially as regarding the nature of tyrants. These passages, however, are not only limited to a few expressions common to St. Thomas Aquinas, Savonarola, and many other writers of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but Professor Ranke himself is obliged to admit that they were used by Machiavelli in a radically different sense. Aristotle describes the vices of the tyrant, but says that he should seek to be just and good, and maintains that justice should be the basis of the State and of politics. Machiavelli maintains, on the contrary, that the new prince, unless he wishes to come to destruction among wicked men, must preserve a semblance of goodness, but be ready to commit cruelties, and to break faith, whenever circumstances make it expedient to do so. Hence there is no real imitation even in the few sentences quoted, and the pretended source turns out to be no source at all.¹ Besides, Professor Ranke likewise admits that the "Prince" was mainly inspired by the new times, of which it was a part, and without which it would be incomprehensible. Its aim, he continues, is substantially immediate and practical, and although its chapters bear a general title, their contents are always special. It is no treatise of general advice, but a book of special counsel offered by Machiavelli to Lorenzo, and of the same sort as that he afterwards offered to Leo X. He took Cæsar Borgia for his model, because that personage resembled him to whom the "Prince" was dedicated and for whom it was written. The one, in fact, was the son, the other the nephew, of a Pope; both hoped and were capable of great conquests. The whole of the first part, *i.e.*, the first twelve chapters, refers to Lorenzo and to the conditions by which both himself and Italy were surrounded. The second and third parts, namely the last fifteen chapters, are very closely connected with the first. In conclusion, three things are, in Ranke's opinion, ascertained: 1. That Machiavelli was persuaded of Italy's need of a prince; 2. That the Medici, and Lorenzo in particular, were ready and anxious to assume this princship; 3. That the book was not only dedicated to Lorenzo, but written for him.² Its true meaning to be the following: only under a prince and by cruel and violent means can this corrupt Italy become united and able to drive out the foreigner. So long as the free government of Florence was main-

¹ As we have noted elsewhere, the same remark was also made by Herr Leo.

² "Genug alles zeigt dass dieses Buch nicht allein Lorenzo'n dedicirt, sondern ganz und gar auf ihn berechnet ist" (*Op. cit.*, p. 199).

tained Machiavelli served the Republic and was satisfied with liberty. When the Medici were restored, and he was expelled from office, the Italian awoke in him, and he sought the best method of freeing the whole country, even at the sacrifice of the liberties of Florence. Instead of this the Medici were driven out, the Republic re-established, and the popular party could not forgive him for having been ready to sacrifice to Italy the freedom of Florence. In conclusion, Machiavelli sought the salvation of Italy, then in desperate peril, and was courageous enough to prescribe poison as the sole remedy.¹

Therefore the keen glance and superior intellect of Ranke had recognized the patriotism of Machiavelli, and the inspiration that his works had derived from it. But while on the one hand the German historian hardly noted that Machiavelli, after having written the "Prince," also tried to obtain some personal advantage by it, on the other he regarded it too exclusively as a book of the moment, and wrongly denied it all general and scientific character. Nor is it true that the "Prince" was written for Lorenzo exclusively, since it was first addressed to Giuliano, and only dedicated to Lorenzo after the former's decease. And it is a still greater exaggeration to join the "Prince" and the "Discourses" together, as though forming a single work with a single aim, and to do so merely because the latter work also demonstrates the necessity of princely government in certain cases.²

The scientific and general character of the "Discourses" is too evident to admit of dispute. And if, as Ranke asserts, their author attributes all the greatness of the Romans to the latter's constant pursual of certain wise maxims of government and statecraft, it should have been thought necessary to investigate the worth of those maxims, which certainly would not be the poison prescribed as the sole cure for a corrupt people. The learned German, absorbed in seeking the connection between the "Prince" and the conditions in which it was written, unduly neglected the examination of the intrinsic and historical value of the doctrines therein expounded. Nevertheless, when we consider that Ranke's essay was a short composition of his early youth, our appreciation of the author's merit is considerably enhanced.

¹ Ranke concludes with these words: "Uns lasst endlich gerecht sein. Er suchte die Heilung Italiens; doch der Zustand desselben schien ihm so verzweifelt, dass er kühn genug war, ihm Gift zu verschreiben" (*Op. cit.*, p. 202).

² "Dass ist überkühner Scharfsinn," as Mohl remarks at p. 580 of his "Die Machiavelli Literatur."

Two years after the publication of Ranke's work a translation of Machiavelli's letters appeared in Berlin by Heinrich Leo, and with a preface from his pen.¹ In this preface some of Ranke's ideas are disputed, and there are a few just and novel observations amid others of very questionable value. Leo, in fact, was one of the first to discover that the prince, as described by Machiavelli, had been a necessary and historic actuality in the Renaissance. This prince and his political conduct required explanation and justification from the point of view of historic necessity, and it was this that Machiavelli had done. Poison or no poison, said Leo,² alluding to Ranke's expression, this constitutes the great importance of the book, and it was a confused instinct of its real value that lead so many to read and examine it with feelings of admiration. But (and here Leo enters upon very debateable ground) even though the book really had a great weight in the world, that is no reason for concluding that he who composed it was of equal worth. Machiavelli decidedly hoped to derive some personal advantage from his work ; but what concern did he feel for the human race ? He explained and justified the prince in order to please the Medici, to win employment from them, and his explanation chanced to be useful to the world. On the score of national self-love it is pardonable for an Italian to believe that such a man should have written a book for the purpose of saving his country ; but no foreigner could be sufficiently ingenuous to hold that belief. How could Machiavelli, who spoke so contemptuously of his fellow-countrymen, seriously believe them capable of driving the Spanish, French and Germans from Italy ? He never thought of liberating Italy : he thought of obtaining office. He addressed his book to Giuliano, and when there was nothing more to be hoped from him he dedicated it to Lorenzo, with the addition of that final chapter, so little accordant with the rest of the work.³

Thus the patriotism of Machiavelli, so acutely discerned and demonstrated by Ranke, was strangely denied by Leo, who, after recognizing the importance and originality of the "Prince," sought to take all merit from the author by attributing great

¹ We have already quoted this book published in 1826 at Berlin.

² At pp. vii, viii, *et passim* of the already-quoted preface.

³ Certain other German writers suppose this last chapter to have been added to the book at a later date. But this is not true. The chapter is contained in the oldest known copies of the "Prince," including those made by Buonaccorsi from the original, and one of which was made after the book had been re-composed by Machiavelli.

value to the book, but pretending that this value was almost an accident of chance. He did not even discern that the last chapter was, as it were, the synthesis and explanation of the whole work. We need not say much of Leo's theory of the Germanic conscience and the Latin conscience. The first, he said, undergoes change and modification according to the difference of its relations with mankind and society; the second has the unchangeability of a crystal, plays, as it were, a game of chess with the outer world, as though the good and evil in course of accomplishment neither touched nor acted upon it. To avoid entering upon a question that would be out of place in these pages, we will merely remark that Herr Leo, on the strength of a few observations upon the Renaissance, was too hasty, if not too superficial, in his judgment of the conditions of the human mind at that period, and of the character of the Latin races in general. And in this way he has contrived to discover two consciences, the Germanic and the Latin,¹ and then uses his discovery, not for the attenuation of Machiavelli's faults, or for the explanation of his character, but to justify increased harshness towards him. If instead he had been content to limit his judgment to the period of history upon which he was engaged, he might perhaps have arrived at conclusions of less severity and greater justice. He would also have shown more caution if, when seeking to insist upon the dissolute cynicism and scepticism which he attributes to Machiavelli, he had refrained from quoting in support of his ideas that "Description of the Plague" which no critic of importance believes to be the work of the Florentine secretary. Nor can we understand why he should have denied the talent and culture of Francesco Vettori. But if, putting aside his vagrant digressions, his too severe and ill-considered criticism, we add the very just if brief observations of Leo on the value of the "Prince" to those by Ranke on the character of Machiavelli and his political writings, we begin to have a clear perception of the path towards sure and satisfactory results. Accordingly no slight praise is owing to these two writers, especially to Ranke, although neither has left us more than a few pages upon Machiavelli, chiefly consisting of disjointed remarks. Neither the one nor the other attempted a complete study of the difficult theme.

This undertaking was assumed by Macaulay, whose celebrated Essay was published in the *Edinburgh Review* (1827), the year

¹ Leo, *op. cit.*, p. viii and fol.

after the appearance of Leo's work. The essay met with very great success in England, both from its high literary merit, and because it was really the first attempt at a serious and complete study of Machiavelli. Macaulay was a man of the nineteenth century with the ideas of the eighteenth, an elegant and most eloquent writer, with an incomparable gift of narrative, great clearness of exposition, but a slenderly philosophical mind. His scientific criticism, therefore, is as weak as his literary criticism was powerful. In endeavouring to make everything excessively plain and clear he frequently eluded the most difficult points by flights of eloquence. Machiavelli was an enigma to be easily explained by his times. He began by describing how the Florentine's works abounded in sentences extolling virtue in the terms of the purest enthusiasm, side by side with others such as the most corrupt of diplomatists would hardly dare to communicate in cipher to one of his spies. Then, with much fervour and brilliancy of colouring, he goes on to describe the national characteristics of the Italians of that day, in whom he finds the same contradictions as in Machiavelli. Thus, according to him, the enigma is solved ; all is made clear. But, even leaving aside the point that the portrait he gives to us is no more than the graphic presentment of the conventional Italian type, as it was so long accepted among foreigners, what result could be derived from it, even were the portrait as faithful as it is eloquent ? Merely that there were contradictions in the character of the Italians, contradictions in the character and ideas of Machiavelli ; nothing more. And thus, instead of one enigma, we have two finally resolved into one, but at the cost of denying Machiavelli any individuality or originality. While as to the intrinsic value of his political doctrines, the English critic remains in the dark, inasmuch as he fails either to explain or to judge them.

On Machiavelli's literary works his observation and judgment are very precise, and he even examines their style with a power that is most remarkable on the part of a foreigner. As a richly-endowed historian, he treats of the "Legations" with much skill and penetration, and was one of the first to note their vast treasure of information and portraiture. With these at his service he victoriously defends Machiavelli from the strange and ridiculous charge, already brought against him and even since repeated, of his having been the adviser and accomplice of Cæsar Borgia's crimes in Romagna. He places his patriotism in the strongest

light, relates his persistent and generous endeavours to endow Italy with a national militia, and justly remarks that this fact alone should have sufficed to shed eternal honour on his name. And thus, by his fascinating style, he carries us through four-fifths of his essay before coming to any investigation of the "Prince," the "Discourses," and the "Histories," the chief factors of Machiavelli's fame.

The "Discourses" and the "Prince," Macaulay at last tells us, uphold one and the same theory; the former trace the progress of a conquering people, the latter that of an ambitious chief. As to the immorality of certain maxims, all, as we have seen, is supposed to be explained by reference to the times. Machiavelli was immoral because the Italy of his day was immoral, and nevertheless he was animated by the purest patriotism, and often by the purest enthusiasm for virtue, because both these qualities were existent in the Italians of the period. Next, seeking briefly to define the intrinsic value of the two works, and to give us a clear and precise idea of them, Macaulay enters upon a course of reasoning that speedily shows us the real nature of his criticism and betrays its weakest side.

Nothing in the world, he says, is so useless as a general maxim. If true, at best it can serve as an example to be learned by heart or as a copy slip for a charity boy. Machiavelli's chief merit, therefore, consists in having given us maxims, neither truer nor more profound than those of all other writers, but only more applicable to real life. However, even putting aside that a maxim may be practical, and yet of small value and no originality, it must be remembered that this practical character is by no means exclusively confined to Machiavelli, but is common to all the political writers, all the Italian ambassadors of the Renaissance, and is, as we have seen, to be found in a higher degree in Guicciardini. Machiavelli's chief merit rather consists in his having with perfect method built up a new science of politics founded upon history and experience. But what could a science of government possibly be if, as Macaulay pretends, general maxims were utterly valueless? He afterwards maintained a similar argument in his other celebrated Essay on Lord Bacon, when, endeavouring to show that the great philosopher's sole merit consisted in his constant search after the useful and practical, he concluded by declaring that the first inventor of shoes should be preferred to the author of the book upon Anger, inasmuch as shoes had saved many from

damp and cold, whereas Seneca had probably never preserved any one from anger. He was unaware that, by this remark, he denied the value of philosophy itself, and of all the moral sciences.

Nevertheless, both the essay on Machiavelli and that on Bacon belong to the most brilliant examples of English prose. In the latter the author's sparkling eloquence is aroused by the contrast he describes between the moral degradation and intellectual loftiness of the English philosopher; in the former, on the contrary, by his description of the numerous contradictions he discerns in the character of Italians and in that of Machiavelli, as well as in Machiavelli's work. But in lieu of solving the enigma, the Essay only makes it appear even more inexplicable than it really was.

Nor is the English critic more fortunate in his endeavour to touch the real conception of Machiavelli's doctrines and to discover their errors. In his opinion the source of those errors consisted in the author's inability to distinguish between public and private good, and from his belief that a strong and prosperous State always ensures the happiness of its subjects. And this, says Macaulay, was caused by his only having in view the small commonwealths of Mediæval Italy and ancient Greece, in which public calamity or prosperity was inseparable from that of the individual. All citizens were impoverished by a national defeat, enriched by a national victory. Thus Machiavelli over-rated the value of all measures by which a nation is rendered formidable to its neighbours, and undervalued those which would ensure its internal prosperity. There is some portion of truth in this, but Machiavelli's ideal did not consist in the small commonwealth of Greece and Italy, but in the commonwealth and empire of Rome.

In the Republics of the Middle Ages special associations and individual passions were in continual revolt against the central power of the State, and thus reduced it to impotence. Machiavelli instead desired a great and powerful State, and for this end would have sacrificed everything, happiness even, and internal prosperity; but he did not confound the public with the private interest. On the contrary, he most unduly sacrificed the latter to the former, because unable at the time to discern any other way of endowing nations with the unity and strength rendered supreme necessities by the anarchy of his times. Far from believing that public prosperity always and inevitably brought about that of the individual, he failed to recognize with sufficient clearness that the welfare of the individual is indispensable to the welfare of the

State, and therefore praised those German republics wherein, as he thought, the individual was poor and the public rich; and above all he extolled those Roman days in which great generals, when war was over, returned empty handed to their homes, and gained their bread by digging their own fields.

When Macaulay speaks of the style of Machiavelli, and, comparing it with that of Montesquieu, demonstrates its great superiority, we are again convinced of his constant eminence as a literary critic. But it causes us no little surprise to find a so justly celebrated historian wasting his time in dwelling on the very secondary qualities—the mere qualities of style, of Machiavelli's Florentine "*Histories*"—without perceiving that the principal merit of these works, their main originality, consists in their being the first to investigate the logical and necessary sequence of the parties dividing the commonwealth, the varied forms of government resulting from this sequence, and the causes of these continual and changeful vicissitudes. The Essay terminates with a renewed tribute to the patriotism of Machiavelli, whose works, says Macaulay, will never be justly appreciated by Italians until the streets of their cities shall again resound with their ancient war-cry, "*Popolo! popolo! muoiano i tiranni!*"¹

And in part, at least, this prophecy has been fulfilled, for no sooner was Italy free than the study of Machiavelli was resumed with great ardour. The chief defects of this Essay are not only caused by its being too literary and descriptive, rather than critical and scientific, but also through its exaggeration of the historic method that too easily believes in the justification and explanation of all accomplished facts. But similar defects notwithstanding, Macaulay's composition holds its ground on the strength of being the first attempt towards a serious and finished criticism on the character and writings of Machiavelli, while the eloquence of the author's style will always cause it to be eagerly read after many other works of even greater merit shall have long been forgotten.

The year 1833 witnessed the appearance of a volume of historical essays by G. Gervinus,² half of which was dedicated to a work entitled "*Florentinische Historiographie*," that was really a new study on Machiavelli, proceeded by a few remarks upon previous Florentine historians. It is written in a mono-

¹ This often republished Essay has been also translated into many languages.

² "*Historische Schriften*." Frankfort on the Main. Warrentz, 1833.

tonous, confused and colourless style, and is full of repetitions. But Gervinus endeavoured to remedy the chief defect of Macaulay ; for, while devoting small attention to Machiavelli's literary works, he made a minute and careful examination of all his political writings, inclusive of the "Art of War," the "Legations," and the "Histories," seeking to discover the fundamental conception by which all are equally inspired. And he was the first to show that this political conception is also present in the "Histories," of which he discerned the scientific as well as the literary importance. He studied the "Histories" with much ardour, making useful reflections on the sources from which they were drawn, and thus being led to an examination of the earlier writers. To a deep and genuine admiration for Machiavelli he joined the advantage of having been trained in the critical school of the great German historians. But, being also one of the writers for whom literature was a means of rousing the national German spirit, he was thus impelled on the perilous course of bringing too much political feeling and patriotism into the field of criticism.

According, then, to Gervinus, some of Machiavelli's ideas were derived from practical considerations on the conditions of his time, and from acquaintance with the real state of his country ; others from ideal desires, from spiritual needs of his own. He did not, as many have believed, concentrate his mind upon material things, but sought in antiquity the excellence demanded by his intellect and his heart, the excellence his country lacked, and to which his age was unable to soar. He offered the outcome of his long and difficult labour to the Italy whose regeneration he sought by recurrence to Roman customs. There was one flaw in his intellect, according to Gervinus, and this was caused by his ignorance of Greek literature, and by having formed his taste and trained his mind upon Roman history and literature. His ignorance of the epopœa, tragedy, and lyric poetry of Greece, his scanty knowledge and slight appreciation of the true spirit of Christianity and the Reformation, deprived him of love for every true and lofty poetic ideal, and for all the arts and sciences outside the limits of politics. This occasioned his tendency to examine the outer rather than the inner aspect of things and events, and hence to always attribute the causes of great political revolutions to some exterior or negative cause rather than to any inner national impulse or necessity. According to Machiavelli, aristocracy came into being as a reaction against the oppression exercised by a

tyrant ; democracy as a reaction against the overwhelming and despotic power of the aristocracy. Thus nothing was caused by an intimate need, nor by an irresistible impulse towards liberty. And hereupon Gervinus undertakes to discover the same fault in the "Histories" of Machiavelli, and throughout the whole of his works, rather than in the history and character of the Latin nation in general.

It is very strange, however, that Gervinus should have failed to perceive that the very theory of the succession of governments, that serves as the peg for the whole of his criticism, and that he attributes to the Florentine's lack of acquaintance with Greek authors, was not of Machiavelli's invention, but taken by him root and branch from the Greeks. We have noted elsewhere that this theory is almost a literal translation from Polybius, and this the German critic should have known, since others had already called attention to the fact. Indeed, he might also have seen that the lofty idealism, the intimate feeling, as the Germans express it, the absence of which he censured in Machiavelli, was present in Dante, who knew no Greek ; began to diminish in Petrarca, one of the first to study that tongue ; and diminished still more in Boccaccio and among the learned men, in proportion with increased knowledge of Greek. This fact was certainly no result of knowledge of Greek, but the historic evolution of the Italian mind, and altogether peculiar to the Renaissance spirit, which mainly sought in Grecian literature and antiquity outer beauty of form and a way of escape from scholasticism, leading towards the world of reality. Whether for good or evil, this tendency was peculiar to the age and to the Italy of that age, and contributed in no slight degree towards the creation of the science of politics which is mainly applied to the outer aspect and actual results of human deeds.

Gervinus was so warm an admirer of the patriotism and genius of Machiavelli, that he concludes his essay by saying, that in him was to be found a compendium of the whole thought and feeling of the Italian nation : the foremost nation during one of the most glorious periods of the world's history. Had Machiavelli, he finally says, possessed a closer knowledge of Greek thought, and of the Reformation then inaugurated by Martin Luther, modern Europe could scarcely boast of another man worthy to be placed on a par with him. Sometimes, however, this sincere admiration leads the German critic astray, so that on meeting with certain

Machiavellian precepts which are offensive to his conscience, he too frequently tries to attenuate, instead of weighing and explaining them. What is the use of struggling to prove that Machiavelli ranks Theseus, Perseus, and Moses higher than Cæsar Borgia? What of trying to prove that he does not unrestrictedly accept the theory of the end justifying the means, since, allowing for every attenuation, so much always remains to be justified or explained, and it is always necessary to either arrive at a fundamental explanation of the system, or be resigned not to understand it at all? He is too ready to think that all can be remedied by proclaiming the patriotism of the Florentine Secretary. But this is an elusion of the problem, not a solution.

Machiavelli, continues Gervinus, confined his investigations to the principality and the republic, because, in his opinion, these two were the only efficient forms of government. Furthermore, he was convinced that a vitiated nation can only be reformed by violent means. And as Italian affairs were going to ruin, and popular government had almost everywhere become an impossibility, the sole means of salvation for the country was offered by the government of a prince, which he therefore recommended, although making exception in favour of Florence, where, as is evidenced by his address to Leo X., he wished republican institutions to be preserved. And here the German critic is at one with Machiavelli, because, like the latter, he discerned throughout history a general law, according to which government passes from the rule of one individual to that of several, and thence to that of many, afterwards recurring to a limited number, and then again to an autocrat.¹ And if in Italy, where the democracy was deeply corrupted, and the aristocracy opposed the greatest obstacle to every improvement, princely government was in Machiavelli's opinion the only possible resource,² so too, according to Gervinus, "a corrupt multitude can only be regenerated by force, as is shown by the continual examples of modern history. The

¹ Gervinus repeated and defended this theory in his "Introduction to the History of the Nineteenth Century," that made so much sensation in its time. See on this head the critical essay of Professor K. Hillebrand, in his "Zeiten, Völker und Menschen," vol. ii. Berlin, Oppenheim, 1875. Hillebrand has a profound knowledge of Italian literature, and has also written some excellent pages upon Machiavelli, in his "Études historiques et littéraires." Paris, Franch, 1868.

² Gervinus, "Historische Schriften," p. 142.

"Prince," adds Gervinus, "gives us the portrait of an armed legislator who cannot be really bad, but neither can afford to be scrupulous: it is sufficient for him to avoid wanton wickedness without being able to strictly observe the rules of every day morality."¹ Necessity knows no law, and great men have always considered themselves in the light of lesser divinities. In all this Machiavelli has keenly examined and comprehended the laws of history and society, and always in the purest spirit of patriotism.

However, according to Gervinus, there is one patent reason why the writings of Machiavelli were never thoroughly, or at best, only half understood; and that is because after-events have as yet demonstrated no more than half the truth of his doctrines. "Posterior ages fought energetically against the revived absolutism of the Renaissance, but they failed to see how and why it had become a necessity. This was clearly understood by Machiavelli alone; hence the height of his genius will be comprehended by coming generations, when, the conflict in which we are now engaged being at an end, they will recognise in the hour of victory that they could never have attained to the advantages within their grasp had not the struggle been provoked by the existence of despotism. It is certain that so long as men are crying out in defence of the rights of the people, and struggling against tyrants, it is impossible to understand, much less be favourable to one whose writings furnished the rules followed by Charles V., Henry III., and Sixtus V. In better times, however, it will be easy to think kindly of the great man who dared to prophecy the truth, and who veritably succeeded, whether he did or did not manifest that intention, in teaching princes how to oppress nations, and in teaching nations how to cast off the yoke imposed upon them; or, to quote the words of Bernardo di Giunta, taught at the same time the use of remedies and of poisons.

"It may be," says Gervinus, in conclusion, "that I aim at a higher ideal than any reached by Machiavelli; but when I see this writer so scantily appreciated on the very points to which he devoted his life and his noble intellect; when I see that the historical and political truths discovered by him are still unrecognised, and hear doubts thrown upon the integrity of his political character and morality, then I am forced to echo his laments upon times in which there is no strength for magna-

¹ Gervinus, "*Historische Schriften*," p. 155.

nimous enterprise, no real persistence in study, no intelligence of the great exemplars of history."¹

There is undoubtedly much sincere enthusiasm in all this, but there is also a certain share of nineteenth-century political rhetoric and modern political feeling. The patriot comes to the front even where only the voice of the critic should be heard. Accordingly there was some reason in the remark made even in Germany, that Gervinus was precisely one of those who connected Machiavelli on the one hand too closely with his times, and on the other not closely enough. Not closely enough when forgetful that the political thinker, even when engaged in abstract definitions of general laws, is forced to conceive them as within the boundaries of the culture of his own nation and his own age. It was therefore impossible for Machiavelli, in his own age of turmoil, to know and invoke a princely government of the lawful and temperate description familiar to our times. To attribute to him the aspirations felt by Germany and Italy in the years preceding their national reconstitution, only confers upon him a physiognomy totally different from his own. Then, again, it is connecting Machiavelli too closely with his times to present his most general theories as results of his personal feelings and patriotism, whereas they have certainly a scientific and independent value as well. For it is this value that the critic should seek to know and define with exactitude.

During a political state of things very little different from that of Germany at the same period, a work appeared in Italy, in 1840, by Professor Andrea Zambelli, entitled, "Considerations on the Book of the 'Prince,'"² which is undoubtedly the best Italian study that has been written on the "Prince." Zambelli was a man of superior talent and learning, well versed in modern history and the literatures of foreign countries, and had given intelligent and industrious study to the works of Machiavelli, for whom he had a genuine admiration. In his "Considerations" he enters on a long train of argument against Macaulay, in order to prove that not only were Italy and her political system corrupt, but that very great corruption existed throughout Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. And Zambelli frequently

¹ Gervinus, *op. cit.*, pp. 159, 160.

² "Le Considerazioni sul libro del Principe," Milan, Pirola, 1840. Afterwards reprinted, together with the "Prince" and the "Discourses" of Machiavelli. Florence, Le Monnier, 1857.

succeeds in proving his case, even in the opinion of foreign critics. Unfortunately, however, he falls into exaggeration of an opposite kind, as, for example, in unduly attenuating the crimes and iniquities of Alexander VI. and of Cæsar and Lucretia Borgia. Notwithstanding this, his description of the times is on the whole sufficiently faithful, and he gives a lucid picture of the enormous difficulties in the way of the Italian princes and tyrants, who, being involved in continual warfare with everything and everybody, were obliged to pursue the only morality possible in an almost anarchical state of things.

The centralization requisite for escape from the Middle Ages, the formation of new States and nations, could only be obtained by means of these tyrants. The counsels offered to them by Machiavelli, and the precepts expounded in his works, were the best which could then be given, and which, when followed, achieved the desired end. But now even Zambelli does his utmost to soften the effect of the Machiavellian maxims, by carefully selecting those devoted to the praise of virtue, national liberty, and independence. The constant aim of his work is the endeavour to prove that Machiavelli desired a united, free, and independent Italy, and that he discovered and promoted the sole means having then any chance of success. But how was it that he was at one moment in favour of a republic, and the next of a monarchy? He sought that which was possible. He knew Cæsar Borgia, and found in him his ideal. On Cæsar's death he recurred to the Republic, his love for which was based upon the closest conviction; when the Republic was extinguished, he turned to the Medici and wrote the "Prince," hoping that the unity of Italy would be the outcome of a monarchy. And as to the means proposed by Machiavelli for the accomplishment of his scheme, Zambelli, as we have seen, does all in his power to attenuate their cruelty and violence, and seeks out earlier examples tending to justify them to some degree, and even making reference to the Scriptures, where, as he says, certain precepts are inculcated which, if found in the "Discourses" or the "Prince," would have aroused more censure than any therein contained.

This author's defence of Machiavelli rests chiefly upon two points. The system of politics counselled in the "Prince," although an impossible system at the present day, when it would be revolting to the public conscience, was the only system possible

at that time, the best that could be pursued, and was therefore accepted and urged by Machiavelli for the liberation of his country. But it is undeniable that he also expounded certain general axioms of government for the maintenance of States, whether republican or monarchical, at all times and in all places. Zambelli, who examined the "Prince" alone, does not seem to be aware of this, and therefore explains everything by the light of the times and the patriotism of his author, thus proving himself rather a learned and patriotic apologist than an independent critic or impartial judge.

In short, therefore, after a comprehensive examination of the works of Macaulay, Gervinus, and Zambelli, we cannot fail to acknowledge that an enormous progress has been made in pursuance of those precepts of historical criticism, of which Ranke was one of the chief imitators in Germany. But, on the other hand, there has been a tendency towards a strangely exaggerated pretence of explaining everything by the times, and a renewal of the no less strange attempt to justify all things by patriotism. It is rightly observed by Mohl at the beginning of his bibliographical work, that in any study upon Machiavelli it is necessary to accurately define not only that which is to be thought of his character as a man, but also what judgment is to be passed upon his doctrines, and how it is to be explained that so great a writer could expound and maintain precepts so entirely opposed to goodness. Even Mohl considers that the moral question is only to be explained by the corruption of the times;^{*} but although, he adds, the times teach us to understand how Machiavelli arrived at immoral doctrines, they fail to show us why he was compelled to arrive at them, inasmuch as a great man rises above his age and raises his age with him. Hence it is clear that any explanation derived from the times is insufficient, at least from this point of view; and therefore even the judgment pronounced by Mohl ends in a sentence of condemnation.

This learned critic in fact goes on to say: It must be kept in mind that in the "Prince" Machiavelli proposed a problem peculiar to his time, and that even in the "Discourses" he is always thinking of a free Italian State, and constantly keeps it in view. Therefore he should not be judged as if writing and speaking in

^{*} "Eine Erklärung ist möglich, aber nur auf eine einzige Weise. Machiavelli muss in seiner Zeit begriffen und als ein Erzeugniss derselben betrachtet werden" (Mohl, *op. cit.*, p. 537).

the abstract for all time. Nevertheless, the question is still forced upon us: What is the intrinsic value of his works? There are certain of Machiavelli's utterances unquestionably denoting a deep knowledge of mankind and the world. He has an excellent method, nor, since Aristotle, was there ever seen the like of it. All this, if not yet a science, constituted the conditions, or it may be said, the foundations required to create one. Machiavelli, however, ignored the profound difference between the ancient and the modern State, and thus his doctrines have become anachronisms.¹ Besides, he had too great a contempt for men, and believed that they could only be improved by force. And this was a second and very serious mistake, giving rise to a policy of violence that took no account of the noblest part of man. Even if his counsels be regarded as only given with a view to special times and conditions, it is an enduring truth that cunning and fraud are never successful in the long run. However wicked men may be, they are alarmed by similar maxims, distrust, and finally reduce them to impotence. And it is another mistake to believe that by violence a degraded people may be made fit for liberty. There would have been a greater probability of seeing Italians sink to a lower depth of corruption by pursuing the counsels of Machiavelli, and accordingly farther removed than ever from the proposed end. So, in conclusion, the intrinsic value of the doctrines amounted to very little. They are fragments of a system with scarcely any coherence; and, indeed, according to Mohl, Machiavelli himself is no more than a fragment, the torso as it were of a great man, a standing example and warning to all of the false road by which he had strayed.²

Thus, in the course of these short remarks, Mohl recurs, although with considerable gentleness, and very considerable learning, to the purely historical explanation, to the criticism and moral condemnation of Machiavelli. And this has been, more or less, the course always pursued. After so much study, so much research,³ constantly multiplied of late years, the intrinsic value of the ideas, works, and character of Machiavelli has been once

¹ "Von Anfang an ein Anachronismus war" (*Op. cit.*, p. 540).

² "Er ist eine Warnung für alle Zeiten; ein betrübendes Beispiel einer vortrefflich angelegten aber unvollkommen ausgebildeten Natur; ein mächtiges aber verstümmeltes Bruchstück eines grossen Mannes" (Mohl, *op. cit.*, p. 541).

³ Let us again mention, among recent German works, that of Dr. Th. Mundt: "Niccolò Machiavelli und das System der modernen Politik." Dritte neu bearbeitete Ausgabe. Berlin, Yanke, 1867.

more put in doubt. While some writers have persistently explained everything by the times, justified everything by patriotism, others, in the name of morality, have continued to pass a sentence of condemnation, that, however qualified, has been invariably most severe.

In 1868, Herr Emil Feuerlein published a paper¹ in Professor Sybel's historical review, comprising some very opportune reflections upon the Machiavelli question, as he calls it, and the manner in which it should be treated. Nowadays, he says, the Machiavelli question has entered upon a new phase. Formerly, it implied an investigation of the author's moral feeling. At present the chief point is to ascertain his political purpose. This is why he has been credited with so many modern ideas, or at least, ideas cast in a modern mould. But Machiavelli will be far better understood when a clear distinction is drawn between his conception as a scholar of the laws of politics in general, and as a citizen and patriot, of the destinies of his own country. It will then be recognized that in the former attitude he gave no more than the logical and accurate result of historic absolutism, as it is seen at this day, and in the second was unable to foresee the modern solution of the national problem upon the German plan. It is imperative to distinguish between the product of Machiavelli's own brain, inevitably bearing, even if only as an accessory, the stamp of his time, and the patriotic desires and feelings which were the actual and substantial outcome of the time in which, and for which, he lived.²

After making these reflections, the author proceeds to inquire into the nature of Machiavelli's patriotic aims. But in this he is scarcely successful, for he positively attempts to prove Machiavelli a federalist. In his opinion the Florentine prince was to be simply the chief of the confederation,³ a form of government for which, as we have already seen, Machiavelli had not the slightest sympathy. For he had explicitly declared that he only considered it acceptable in certain exceptional cases, namely, when there was no hope of anything better. He might advise it for a small State like Tuscany, but never proposed it for Italy, a country that,

¹ "Zur Machiavelli Frage," von Emil Feuerlein. "Historische Zeitschrift, herausgegeben von H. von Sybel," Anno (1868), No. 1, München, Literarisch-Artistische Anstalt.

² Feuerlein, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 4.

³ "Eine Art Richtergewalt im alttestamentlichen Sinne" (Feuerlein, *op. cit.*, p. 7).

according to his views, could only attain to unity and power by means of the monarchy.

Herr Feuerlein then proceeds to point out, with the brevity imposed by the limits of his essay, what was Machiavelli's scientific merit, what the value of his doctrines, and what the amount of novelty enunciated in them. Machiavelli discerned that the State has a definite aim of its own, and that there is unity in social aims. For him the State signified an end, not a means ; it was an organism, allowing no obstacles to impede its development, to which, indeed, everything must be subordinated. For us, on the contrary, the State is only one of the many forms of our social life ; other forms have equal rights to existence, and their manifold inter-relations are regulated by public rights. Machiavelli discovered that the Middle Ages were involved in a chaos of special institutions, and were always in confusion ; he was the first man daring to declare that the society to which we all belong can have only one aim. Living in an age when the ancient, mediæval divisions of Church and State, republics and associations, feudalism and free companies, were either already disappearing or about to disappear, he rejected and condemned, at once and for ever, all that stood in the way of the unity of the State. In fact, the formula leading from the mediæval chaos to the juridical order of modern times precisely consisted in reducing different aims to the one fixed aim of the State, that Machiavelli was the first to divine and make known to the world. This, however, being a formula, is likewise an abstraction, tending to a mechanical scheme, rather than to the ample, natural, organic, and free development of the varied culture and general conscience of society.

He was urged upon this path by his remembrance of the ancient unity of the Roman State that he sought to reproduce. But with him, as with the Reformation, it came about that, in endeavouring to repeat the past a new future was produced. The "Prince" treats of the monarchy, the "Discourses" of the republic ; but the idea of a State autonomy and its exclusive aim is common to both works. Machiavelli studied these two forms of government, as two facts existing in the past and the present ; but in his ignorance of the means by which monarchy can co-exist with the liberty of the people, as well as of those that, by separating the executive from the legislative power, confer stability upon the republic, his monarchy is naturally harsh and despotic, while his republic allows undue license to the people.¹

¹ Feuerlein, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

But the abstract philosophical tone of Herr Feuerlein's exposition fails to give the true character of Machiavelli's writings, for Machiavelli conceived every idea in a concrete and almost personal shape. Besides, he was, as Herr Feuerlein himself remarks, the most objective of writers, so that the events he relates seem to live in his pages, and hence the marvellous force of his style. Now this concrete objectiveness is Machiavelli's prominent characteristic, and continually leads him to expound his theories in the form of precepts and counsels for the guidance of statesmen, and at every step places the moral question before us, side by side with the political question. The latter is certainly the main point, but the former cannot be so entirely suppressed, as Herr Feuerlein seems to wish.

We may conclude that although Machiavelli has now been studied more or less from every point of view, the contradictions of his writings have not yet been cleared away, nor has any judgment yet passed upon him been generally received as a final sentence. The principal reason of this is, that even writers of the greatest influence have almost always studied him under some one alone of his manifold aspects. This writer has sought the solution of the enigma in examination of the times; another in the character of the man; others, again, have limited their investigations to his works, and only beheld in them the republican or the monarchist; while some have perceived nothing but the political question, and others almost suppressed it in favour of the moral question. Examined from any one of these exclusive points of view, Machiavelli's aspect is changed, and his true character is left unexplained and unintelligible. Nothing but a thorough examination of Machiavelli under all his numerous aspects—in other words, nothing short of an ample and detailed biography can really bring us nearer to the difficult goal. Some attempts of this kind have certainly been made. The first of them, however, were decided failures, owing to their neglect of various monographs throwing a new light on this or that part of the theme. Monsieur Périès prefaced his translation of the complete works of Machiavelli (1823-26) by a "*Histoire de Machiavel*,"¹ that, although a genuine biography, was merely compiled from Baldelli's "*Elogio*," and from the prefaces to the

¹ The translation of the "*Opere*" in twelve volumes was published by Michaud, Paris, 1823-26. The "*Histoire de Machiavel*" occupies half the first volume, 288 pages.

Florentine editions of the "Opere," published in 1782 and 1796; and of the later Italian edition of 1813. The year 1833 saw the appearance of the two stout volumes by Monsieur Artaud, to which frequent reference is made in these pages. While giving evidence of much patience and perseverance on the part of their author, these volumes lack originality, both in historic research and the conclusions arrived at with regard to the works. For many years afterwards no one attempted to write a biography of Machiavelli, for that title can scarcely be accorded to a book by Herr Mundt, mainly composed of a series of reflections upon the works and doctrines of the Florentine Secretary. The centenary of Machiavelli, celebrated in Florence in the year 1869, and the prize offered for competition on that occasion, led to the publication of many Italian works upon Machiavelli, among which were included four new biographies. From motives easily understood by the reader, we refrain from all mention of these more recent works, and especially from all criticism on the biographies. This chapter is dedicated to a more limited theme, and has already greatly exceeded its due amount of space.¹

¹ Among the works published during our own time in Italy, the chapter upon Machiavelli in the "Storia di Letteratura Italiana" of Professor De Sanctis is worthy of special notice. Both in this and the essay by the same author, entitled "L'uomo del Guicciardini," many original remarks are to be found. Monsieur Tréveret has devoted considerable space to Machiavelli in his volume "L'Italie au XVI. Siècle," 1st series, Paris, Hachette, 1877. And a very great number of pamphlets, magazine articles, addresses, and studies of every size and kind have recently appeared upon Machiavelli. We are careful to mention those of which we make use. Professor U. A. Canello also speaks at length of Machiavelli in his "Storia della Letteratura Italiana nel Secolo XVI." (Milan, Vallardi, 1880), a work that has only recently come under our notice.

As to the more recent biographies, the first to appear was the "Machiavelli e i suoi tempi" of Signor Carlo Gioda. Florence Barbèra, 1874. It is principally devoted to the exposition of the Machiavellian doctrines. The following year appeared the work of Signor Gaspar Amico, "La Vita di Niccolò Machiavelli, Commentari Storico-Critici." Florence, Civelli, 1875. At a later date Signor Francesco Nitti brought out the first volume of another biography, entitled "Machiavelli nella Vita e nelle Opere, studiato da Francesco Nitti." Naples, Detken, and Rocholl, 1876. This volume gives the narrative of Machiavelli's life down to 1512, but does not treat of his works. The second volume has not yet appeared, we believe. Finally, Signor Francesco Mordenti has issued a work entitled, "Diario di Niccolò Machiavelli." Florence, Printing Office of the "Gazzetta d'Italia," 1880. This book is chiefly a collection of notices upon the life of Machiavelli.

It is right to add that all these works make reference to the new edition of the "Works of Machiavelli," commenced by Messrs. L. Passerini and Fanfani in 1873 (Florence, the Cenniana Printing Office), and afterwards continued by Messrs.

L. Passerini and G. Milanesi down to the sixth volume issued in 1877. This edition has been interrupted since the death of Signor Passerini. It comprises the "Storie" and the "Legazioni," many documents, and especially many letters addressed by the Florentine Government to Machiavelli during the latter's absence on political missions. As we have elsewhere noted, the documents are not all of equal value, some being altogether useless, while others are of great service to the biographer. Unfortunately these volumes have been carelessly revised.





CHAPTER VI.

Leo X., his Court and his Policy.



BEFORE continuing our examination of Machiavelli's works, it is necessary to revert to the history of his times, with which they are so closely connected. The accession of Leo X. to the Papal throne had been welcomed with the highest hopes, and particularly in Italy. The world was weary of the scandalous excesses of Alexander VI. and of the restless daring of Julius II. It yearned for a little rest and peace ; therefore Cardinal Giovanni dei Medici seemed to be the Pope demanded by all. Vettori tells us that "he had played his part so well, as to be deemed a man of exemplary life." ¹ It is certain that he had a fair general reputation ; but he was also known to be very shrewd and adroit in the guidance and management of men. In politics he belonged to the school of his father, Lorenzo the Magnificent, for while very ambitious of power for himself and his family, he veiled his intent beneath a great show of kindness and simplicity, and always adopted what, in Florentine parlance, were called civil methods. Nevertheless, he was quite able, on emergency, not only to lie and cheat, and almost take pride in so doing, but even to stain his hands with blood. He had a great and well-deserved reputation for liberality with his purse. In fact, he was not only lavish of that which he had, but of that which he had not. "It was no more possible," Vettori

¹ "Sommario della Storia d'Italia," in the "Archivio Storico," Appendix, No. 22, p. 297.

tells us, "for his Holiness to keep a thousand ducats, than for a stone to fly upwards of itself." ¹ Were the doors of the Pantheon made of gold, the Pope would never be able to leave them untouched," ² said one of the Venetian ambassadors. And it was added by another, that besides his inability to keep account of money, the crowd of Florentines about him, claiming to be relations, stripped him of every soldo; and for this reason were greatly hated at Court.³ Nor less considerable was his reputation as a great Mæcenas, a patron and cultivator of letters and all the fine arts. The palace at St. Eustachio,⁴ his residence while a Cardinal, speedily became a pleasant resort for artists and literati. It was also a museum, and served for the reception of the Medicean library, purchased by the Cardinal in 1508 from the friars of St. Mark, by whom it had been acquired in Savonarola's time.⁵

Leo X. was of middle height, with a large head, a reddish complexion, and projecting eyes; he was so short-sighted as to be always obliged to use glasses, was extremely proud of his beautiful hands, which he never forgot to exhibit, and prouder still of his voice, which was equally melodious in speech and song. He suffered much from a disease that made it unpleasant to approach him; he was very corpulent, and unable to endure any prolonged fatigue. All the courtier poets were loud in their praise of his Latin verses, which were very poor stuff, although improvised with much facility; he won general applause and admiration by his singing, his discussions on painting, sculpture, and music, and his conversation on all subjects. But in reality he never succeeded in producing anything original. He was an accomplished *dilettante*, a great lover of art and literature, but he was nothing more. And in this he clearly showed his inferiority to his father, who undoubtedly left his individual stamp on the literature of his time.

Before the Conclave that elected him was dissolved, the Pope had already made choice of his two secretaries. These were, the Venetian, Pietro Bembo, a learned Latinist, an elegant Italian writer, a lover of the fair sex and of gay life, and Giovanni Sadoletto,

¹ Vettori, "Sommario," p. 322.

Albéri, "Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti," series 2, vol. iii.; "Relazione" by Marin Giorgi, p. 56.

² Ibid., "Relazioni," &c., *vol. cit.*; "Relazione," by Marco Minio, p. 63.

⁴ Afterwards known as the Palazzo Madama, from having been inhabited by Caterina dei Medici, before she went to France. It is now occupied by the Italian Senate.

⁵ It was afterwards retransferred to Florence.

another erudite Latinist, a wit and devoted to pleasure and brilliant society. All the other prelates the Pope collected about him were more or less of the same stamp. A prominent place was for some time held among them by Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena, the noted author of that scandalous comedy, "*La Calandria*." But although a scapegrace, he was nevertheless well versed in public affairs, had been very zealous in promoting the Pope's election, and was speedily recompensed by a Cardinal's hat. His enjoyment of it was brief; his health was already undermined; soon the suspicion of having intrigued with France deprived him of favour, and when his death took place not long after, he was said to have died by poison.

Leo X. was only happy when surrounded by these prelates, his poets and his artists; and he revealed his true nature and expressed his genuine sentiments when, on meeting his brother Giuliano, shortly after his election, he said to him: "Let us enjoy the papacy, since God has given it to us."¹ To enjoy life, less sensually than æsthetically, was the chief aim of his desires. "He wants neither wars nor troubles," wrote the Venetian Ambassador, Marin Giorgi.² "He thought of everything excepting war,"³ wrote the Florentine Ambassador, Francesco Vettori. Yet while sacrificing everything to his beloved pleasures, and therefore really desirous of peace, he was always at war, and kept the whole of Italy in continual agitation.

For being always in need of large funds for his Court, his pleasures and entertainments, his literati and artists, and even for his buffoons, he tried to obtain supplies in many different ways, and these ways often gave rise to dissensions ending in warfare. Thus he speedily cast a covetous eye on the territories of Cervia and Ravenna, yielding a yearly revenue of fifty thousand ducats from salt, and thereby aroused the suspicions of the Venetians to whom they belonged.⁴ He also ardently desired to win fame, longed to be regarded as a power in Italy, and above all had a keen and unrelenting resolve to aggrandize the whole of his family. "The Pope and his Medici," wrote the Venetian Ambassador, "have no other thought than of increasing the fortunes of their

¹ Albéri, "*Relazione*" of Marin Giorgi, p. 52.

² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

³ Vettori, "*Sommario*," p. 322.

⁴ Albéri, "*Relazione*" (already cited), p. 51.



LEO X.

(After the portrait by Raphael at the Pitti Palace.)

house ; and his nephews, unsatisfied with dukedoms, pretend that one of them ought to be a king." ¹

We have already related how these desires constantly tended towards the projected foundation of a North Italian State, to consist of Modena and Parma, and be afterwards extended to Ferrara and Urbino, the which plan naturally led to conflict with the Este and Della Rovere. As we have seen, it was this project that first suggested to Machiavelli the idea of the "Prince," in which he counselled the Medici to extend their rule over the whole of Italy, to unite it and organize its forces. Nevertheless, the Pope's original intention had been to bestow the new kingdom upon his nephew Lorenzo, and, on the supposition of being able to take advantage of the inevitable confusion in Italy, to seize the Neapolitan State for his brother Giuliano. Soon discovering the impossibility of carrying out this second and more daring design, he determined to give Modena and Parma to Giuliano. But this brother, a man of fantastic and honest disposition, died in 1516, and thus there only remained Lorenzo, aged twenty-one years, and who, according to the Venetian Ambassador, "was of a bold temperament, shrewd, fitted for great deeds, and if not equal to Valentino's very little behind him." ² Lorenzo continually spurred on the Pope, and all the more because he was by no means content to remain in Florence, where his authority was rather nominal than real.

There was also another Medici of riper years and stronger influence, Giulio (1478-1534), natural son of the Giuliano murdered in the conspiracy of the Pazzi. This Giulio, born shortly after his father's death, and afterwards very notorious in the world as Pope Clement VII., had early adopted the ecclesiastical career, was a Knight of Rhodes, an assiduous courtier to Cardinal Giovanni, and increasingly assiduous after the latter became Pope Leo X. He had played a very active part in the plot that drove Soderini from Florence, and was shortly after nominated Archbishop of that city. Nor did much time pass before he was raised to the purple, after a false preliminary declaration of his legitimacy, managed in the same manner practised by Alexander VI. on Cæsar Borgia's behalf. Hats were conferred at the same time upon Bernardo da Bibbiena, the Datary Lorenzo Pucci, and

¹ Albéri, "Relazione," quoted above, p. 45. Marin Giorgi wrote this Report in 1517.

² Ibid., "Relazione," above quoted, by Giorgi, pp. 51, 52.

Innocenzo Cibo, the son of the Pope's sister. And this was Leo X.'s first step in the violation of his oaths, the first thing to damage the good opinion formerly conceived of him. Cardinal Giulio was employed in all affairs of importance, and held to be a man of great sagacity, and not merely adviser but almost leader to the Pope.¹ For being much less devoted to pleasure, less desirous of playing the Mæcenas, he was able to work hard and without allowing himself to be distracted from business. But in truth the Pope only turned him to account as a useful and docile instrument of his own will. To avoid fatigue he always made great use of others ; but-always wished everything to be done in his own way, and to achieve his own ends, no matter by what means.

It was his misfortune to have mounted the pontifical throne at a moment when Europe was racked by the bloody contests and rivalries of divers great potentates ; at a moment when the first stirrings of religious reform were beginning to be felt ; when Italy was a prey to the French and Spaniards contending for mastery over her, and alternately summoning other foreigners to their assistance. The aim of Leo X. was to become supreme arbiter of the general policy of Europe. The authority of the Church, the family prestige, and singular good fortune that had so far attended him, certainly placed him in a very lofty position, and caused many to hope that, as his father had been styled the balancing needle of Italy, so he might be arbiter in the great political struggles of Europe. To effect this end, however, his conduct should have been constantly governed by some noble aim and genuine political creed. Instead, he nearly always allowed himself to be ruled by purely personal and often unworthy aims.

Indifferent to religion, it was impossible for him to form the most distant idea of the real nature of the Reformation ; ambitious in politics, he only sought to increase his revenues, his State, and the power of his house. To these ends he sacrificed everything, making and unmaking alliances, frankly declaring it to be a maxim of the true statesman never to remain faithful to a single alliance, but instantly to conclude another with some prince hostile to the first, in order to be prepared for every contingency.² Thus, his policy was a succession of continual, interminable changes, a

¹ Albéri, the above-quoted "*Relazione*" : Giorgi's, p. 52, and Marco Minio's, p. 65.

² Ibid., "*Relazioni*," series 2nd, vol. iii. "*Relazione*" of Antonio Soriano, p. 290.

labyrinth impenetrable to all who cannot discern that its sole clue consists in the personal interests of the Pope and his irresistible craving for the aggrandizement of his kindred.

It is easy to conceive the fatal results brought upon Italy by the policy of a man such as this. No sooner was Julius II. dead, than General Cardona seized on Parma and Piacenza in behalf of the Duchy of Milan. The lord of that State, Massimiliano Sforza, held little more than a nominal authority, and being a weak and inexperienced youth, was a puppet in the hands of Swiss, Spaniards, and Emperor, to the extreme vexation of his Secretary, Girolamo Morone, who was, on the contrary, a man of wide capacity, restless and audacious temper, and always bent upon daring designs. The Pope, being cruelly hurt by the loss of the two cities, upon which he had so firmly counted for his kinsmen, immediately began to weave fresh intrigues. Invited to ally himself with France, who in March, 1515, had leagued with Venice for the attack of Milan, he refused consent, because the restoration of Parma and Piacenza was not guaranteed to him.¹ On the other hand he feigned an inclination to join the league arranged in April, at Mechlin, between Henry VIII. and the Emperor, for the defence of Milan and the States of the Church, and for the attack upon France. Meanwhile, Girolamo Morone had hastened to Rome to obtain supplies for his lord's defence, and the Pope, without as yet coming to any decision, gave him funds for the hire of Swiss troops. War broke out immediately. The French poured in on one side, the Venetians advanced on another, and Milan rose in revolt against the Duke, who, with only Como and Novara left in his possession, shut himself up in the latter city. Then, however, the Swiss poured down from their mountain passes, signally defeated the French at Riotta in the month of June, and thus brought about a change in the face of affairs. Cardona, in fact, as the representative of Spain, was the first to join the League of Mechlin, and handed over Parma and Piacenza to the Pope, who then naturally gave in his adhesion also. The Spaniards instantly hurried to attack the Venetians, and approached very near to the lagoons. In October, at Motta, he gave battle to Alviano, who had been released by the French, and routed his army. At the same time France lost Genoa, was assailed at home by the English and Imperial forces, and defeated

¹ Gregorovius, "*Geschichte der Stadt Rom*," vol. viii. p. 23; De Leva, "*Storia di Carlo V.*," vol. i. p. 163.

by them at Guinegatte (16th August, 1513). The Swiss also marched into France on the Dijon side; but La Trémoille, by means of gold and golden promises, succeeded in inducing them to retire from Milan.

Now at last Louis XII. discovered that it would be to his interest to join with the Pope, who had the power of raising up so many enemies against him. He therefore renounced the *Conciliabolo*, already commenced at Pisa, and subjected the Gallican Church to the authority of the Lateran Council. In this manner a new treaty was speedily concluded between the Pope, France, and England. Leo X., therefore, now found himself allied with the French, who had been constantly adverse to his house; indeed, it was exactly at that moment that he entered into relationship with King Louis XII. by the marriage of Philiberte of Savoy with Giuliano dei Medici, and promised to send the latter to aid in the retaking of Milan. Meanwhile, he was already secretly engaged in negotiating an agreement between the Empire, Spain, Venice, Florence, and Milan, in order, after his usual fashion, to keep the road open for turning this way or that, as circumstances might require. "Full of devices," so wrote Guicciardini,¹ "for while on the one hand he had no wish that the King of France should recover the Milanese State, on the other he tried to conciliate him and the other potentates as much as possible, by divers tricks." Hence it is impossible to keep pace with his innumerable tergiversations. He made treaties with all and was faithful to none, because none would give him the promises and guarantees required to forward his designs on the Neapolitan kingdom and Upper Italy. Yet all were cognisant of these ambitious schemes of his.² When it was seen that the Pope permitted the Florentines to attack the Lucchese; and that instead of giving up Reggio, according to his sworn promise, he purchased Modena from the Emperor for 44,000 ducats, all penetrated the nature of his designs in that quarter. Sienna, Ferrara, Urbino, dreaded that at any moment they might find themselves caught in the meshes of the Holy Father's intrigues, and thus he was naturally the object of universal mistrust.

But now the direction of European affairs was changed by a novel event. On the death of his wife Anne, Louis XII. had espoused the Princess Mary, sister of King Henry VIII., and she

¹ Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," vol. vi. p. 31; De Leva, "Storia di Carlo V.," vol. i. p. 175 and fol.

² Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," pp. 20-31.

was so young and beautiful that ill-natured tongues declared that King Louis had brought from England a "hackney of so swift a pace that in a few months it carried him out of the world."¹ In fact, being of a sickly habit, and fifty-three years of age, whereas his wife was only sixteen, his strength was unequal to the weight of his new happiness, and he expired on the first day of the year 1515.

His successor, Francis I., was only twenty years of age, was enthusiastic for the memory of Gaston de Foix, and burning to avenge the defeats of Novara and Guinegatte. During the past year he had taken to wife the eldest daughter of King Louis, heiress through her mother to the Duchy of Brittany, and inheriting her father's pretended claims on that of Milan. He was of lofty stature, handsome, and robust, of chivalric, pleasure-loving temperament, literary tastes, and a mind alike capable of the conception and execution of daring designs. And together with the French crown he also assumed the title of Duke of Milan, and made preparations for an Italian campaign. To this end he formed an alliance with the Archduke Charles, renewed the treaty with England, and ratified that already made by Louis XII. with Venice.² But it was not possible for him to come to terms with the Pope, inasmuch as the Nuncio Canossa, bishop of Tricarico, an energetic and ready-witted man, not only urged the usual demand for Modena and Parma, but even claimed a promise of the kingdom of Naples. Francis I. almost lost patience at so exorbitant a request. "His Holiness claims too much," he replied, "and hard would it be for us to grant it, without grievously burdening ourselves and the crown. Neither he nor his brother Giuliano would be strong enough to rule and discipline so vast and unquiet a realm that has never long remained subject to one and the same master."³

Without losing time the King assembled a powerful army between the Saône, the Rhone, and the Alps, and at last moved towards Italy with 60,000 foot soldiers, 30,000 cavalry, and 72 pieces of artillery. There were the celebrated French men-at-arms, consisting of the highest nobles of the land, and led by the

¹ Vettori, "Sommario," p. 303.

² De Leva, "Storia di Carlo V.," vol. i. chap. vi.; Mignet, "Rivalité de Francois I. et de Charles-Quint" (Paris, Didier, 1875), vol. i. chap. i.

³ *Vide* "Documenti riguardanti Giuliano dei Medici e il Pontefice Leone X.," in the "Archivio Storico," Appendix viii. pp. 310-15.

monarch in person. There were many Lansquenets, and many Gascons, and these latter were commanded by Navarro, who had deserted from Spain.¹ Meanwhile, on the 17th July, an armed confederation had been formed by the Emperor, the Catholic king, Sforza, and the Pope, "for the defence and deliverance of Italy." In order to obtain the adhesion of the Pope it had actually been necessary to yield him Parma and Piacenza, and promise to recompense their owner, Sforza, with other lands in exchange. Raymond of Cardona was already at the head of eight or ten thousand Spaniards; the Swiss were marching over the Alpine passes in very large numbers. They had been enrolled by Maximilian Sforza and the Pope, who had engaged to pay them and provide them with an efficient force of cavalry, already organized under the command of Prospero Colonna. Besides this, the Pope had furnished an army of Florentine and pontifical troops, commanded in the first instance by Giuliano, and then, when he was invalided, by Lorenzo dei Medici, with the title of Captain of the Pope and the Florentines. But there was a rumour, soon to be verified, that these had orders not to fight against France in earnest, but only to manœuvre so as to obtain the best possible terms for the Pope from the winning side; and this, as was natural, proved highly injurious to the conduct of the war.²

On September 13, 1515, the two armies met in pitched battle at Marignano. The Swiss, in three divisions of eight or ten thousand men each, made a vigorous and successful attack upon the French men-at-arms, and were preparing as usual to hurl themselves on the artillery, when Francis I. charged at the head

¹ De Leva, "*Storia di Carlo V.*," vol. i. p. 207; Mignet, "*Rivalité*," &c., vol. i. p. 64.

² "And it is said that this army is not there to oppose France, but to obtain better terms" (Marin Sanuto, as quoted in De Leva's "*Storia*," &c., vol. i. p. 208, note). *Vide* also Capponi's "*Storia della Repubblica di Firenze*," vol. ii. p. 319 and fol.; Francesco Vettori, "*Sommario*," p. 308.

At this juncture the Doge of Genoa, Ottaviano Fregoso, although very friendly with the Pope, who had been his benefactor, made secret terms with France, first deceiving the Pope, and then sending him a lengthy letter, saying that it would have been very difficult for him to justify himself in addressing private individuals or princes who should measure matters of State by private considerations; but that it was positively superfluous to offer excuses in writing to so wise a prince, who, better than all others, would know how much was lawful for the salvation or even aggrandizement of the State. Guicciardini, "*Storia di Italia*," vol. vi. p. 57.

of his guard, and carrying on the struggle far into the night, the fate of the day was left undecided. He then ordered Alviano to advance with his Venetians; despatched messages to some other generals, and having rested for a few hours leaning against a cannon, renewed the fight at dawn. The battle raged fiercely, and seemed to be turning in favour of the Swiss, when the arrival of Alviano, and his onslaught to the cry of "*Viva San Marco!*" compelled them to give way. They made one last and desperate effort and then beat a retreat, leaving from seven to eight thousand dead on the field. And this fight, termed by the war-experienced Trivulzio, "the battle of the giants," entirely destroyed the prestige so long enjoyed by the Swiss, who were never again held to be invincible, as in former times. Nevertheless, they executed their retreat-operations in admirable order; left several thousand men in the fortress of Milan, and went back to their mountains threatening to return to take revenge at some future opportunity.

Francis I., who had made Bayard knight him on the battle field, now entered Milan and levied a fine of 300,000 ducats. Soon after, the citadel surrendered in opposition to the advice of Morone, who effected his escape from the hands of the French.¹ Maximilian Sforza, tired of the Swiss and his own bad luck, gave himself up to the king, and withdrawing to France, enjoyed his pension of 36,000 ducats without further troubling himself about anything else. Cardona, disgusted with Pope and Florentines, whose forces had always shilly-shallied, and failed him at every emergency, marched towards Naples. The King halted at Pavia, intending to move thence to take possession of Parma and Piacenza and then push on farther. The news of these events naturally caused the greatest alarm to the Pope, who beheld himself forsaken by his friends and at the mercy of his enemies. The first day's fight at Marignano, and the news of the successes achieved by the Swiss, were swelled on the way to Rome into an announcement of the total defeat of the French and Venetians. Cardinal Bibbiena had immediately caused the city to be illuminated, and the Pope determined to tell the great news with his own lips to the Venetian Ambassador, Marin Giorgi. But the following day the latter received despatches from the Signoria announcing the victory, and accordingly arrayed himself in festive attire, hastened to the Vatican and caused the Pope to be awakened. And when Leo

¹ De Leva, "*Storia di Carlo V.*," vol. i. p. 214.

appeared, much bewildered and only half dressed, the Orator said to him :—

"Holy Father, yesterday Your Holiness gave me evil and false intelligence, to-day I can give you the good and authentic news that the Swiss have been routed." And so saying he handed him the despatch of the Signoria, on reading which, the Pope exclaimed in consternation : "*Quid ergo erit de nobis, et quid de vobis ?*" "It will go well with us," replied the Orator, "for we are with the most Christian king, and your Holiness shall suffer no harm." "We will place ourselves in the hands of the *Cristianissimo*, and crave his mercy,"¹ concluded the Pope, who even at that moment would not speak of yielding to the Venetian Signory.

As a true statesman, Francis I. sought to consolidate his conquest before venturing upon new enterprises. Therefore, after seizing Brescia and some other territories, and attempting to take Verona, which however was defended by the Emperor Maximilian, he arranged a treaty with the Archduke Charles at Noyon (August, 13, 1516), promising him the hand of his daughter, who by bringing with her dowry the French claims on the Neapolitan kingdom, would put an end to all quarrels and wars in that cause. Meanwhile, the Catholic king—no other than the Archduke Charles, who by the decease of Ferdinand of Aragon (January 23, 1516) had succeeded to the Spanish throne, and carried on the government with the aid of Cardinal Ximenes—was to pay 100,000 gold crowns every year until the marriage—necessarily delayed on account of the bride's tender age—could be consummated. Charles, the prime mover of these arrangements, persuaded Maximilian to sign a new treaty (Brussels, December 3, 1516) by which, on payment of 200,000 ducats, Verona was ceded to the Venetians, so that they and the French became masters of Upper Italy. A permanent alliance (Freiburg, November, 29, 1516) was concluded between Francis I. and the thirteen Swiss Cantons, to whom the King disbursed large sums of money. And finally, on March 11, 1517, the League of Cambray was ratified, by which Charles, Maximilian and Francis I. mutually guaranteed their respective dominions. By this means the Archduke, already sovereign of Spain and the Low Countries, secured his dominion over Naples, and began to prepare the way for his enormous power in the future. But for the moment the world's eye was fixed upon Francis I., who after humiliating the Swiss, had succeeded in

¹ Albéri, *Vide* Giorgi's before-quoted "*Relazione*," pp. 44, 45.

gaining their friendship; who had become lord of Milan, and had wrested Verona, the key of Tirol, from the hands of the fantastic and turbulent Emperor; who had obtained guarantees from Germany and Spain for the integrity of his own States, and remained the ally of the Venetians.¹

Nevertheless, the result of all these labours would have been uncertain and precarious had the king not succeeded in gaining over the Pope, who, if left in opposition, might have again stirred up enemies against him on all sides. Accordingly, negotiations were immediately set on foot, and it was decided that the King and the Pope should meet at Bologna to bring them to a conclusion. Leo X. came to Tuscany towards the end of November, 1515, and to allow time for the completion of the great preparations in Florence for his state reception, he tarried a few days at the villa of the Gianfigliuzzi family at Marignolle. On the 30th of the month he entered the city by the San Pier Gattolini gate, of which the outer portion had to be demolished to allow space for the passage of the Pontiff and his numerous suite, comprising eighteen cardinals. He was lodged at Santa Maria Novella, removed the following day to the Medici palace, and started for Bologna on the 3rd December. It is recorded by the chroniclers that Florence employed two thousand workmen for more than a month, and spent over seventy thousand florins in the festivities given on this occasion.² The streets and squares through which the Pope was to pass were plenteously decorated with triumphal arches, statues, obelisks and temples, all designed by the best Italian artists, many of whom were at that time flourishing in Florence.³ Some of these erections were copied from ancient monuments at Rome,⁴ while others were original inventions.

¹ Mignet, "Rivalité," &c., vol. i. chap. i.

² Among other accounts *vide* that in the Chronicle of Luca d'Antonio di Luca Landucci, a Florentine grocer, of which a manuscript copy is to be found in the Marucelliana Library (Cod. 26). Signor Del Badia, of the State Archives, is about to edit it, and has collated it with an autographic fragment at Sienna. This Chronicle contains a minute description of these festivities, and also a good deal of information respecting Savonarola. This latter portion has, however, been already brought out in a separate pamphlet by Signor Fanfani.

³ Vasari, "Vite," &c., Le Monnier edition ("Life of Andrea del Sarto"), vol. viii. p. 267.

⁴ "Erant variae structurae similes illis quae videntur in Urbe Roma, videlicet obeliscus sicut in Vaticano, columna sicut in Campo Martio, et huiusmodi usque ad Sanctam Mariam Novellam." "Diario" of Paride De Grassis. Roscoe published this and other fragments of the "Diario" in his "Life of Leo X."

Antonio da San Gallo had built an octagonal temple on the Piazza della Signoria ; Baccio Bandinelli, a giant in the Loggia ; but the chief attraction to the public was the wooden façade added to the Cathedral. Its architectural portions, bas-reliefs and statues, were the work of Jacopo Sansovino, its paintings by Andrea del Sarto. The original idea had once before been suggested by Lorenzo the Magnificent.¹

The Pope, after leaving Florence, made a state entry into Bologna on the 7th December, and the King arrived there on the 11th and stayed there until the 15th. On the 22nd December Leo X. returned to Florence, remaining there for Christmas and the series of festivals given in Carnival, until the 19th of February, when he at last started for Rome.²

The meeting at Bologna led to the ratification of a treaty that had been already drawn up on October 13, 1515. The Pope not only repudiated his previous arrangement with the Emperor, but, with far greater violence to his feelings, had to restore Parma and Piacenza to the King, and promise the restitution of Modena and Reggio to the Duke of Ferrara, who, on his part, was to return him the sum already disbursed to the Emperor. Francis I. promised, in his turn, to defend Florence and the States of the Church, and to bestow on the brother and nephew of the Pope certain dignities and revenues in France. The Pragmatic Sanction was abrogated by a treaty increasing the subordination of the Gallican Church to the monarch and the Pope.³

On this occasion Francis I. had two more requests to make to the Pope. He begged the gift of the Laocoon group, recently discovered in Rome, and already famous throughout the civilized world. Leo X., who, to use the expression of a modern writer, would have more willingly yielded the head of one of the Apostles, consented to part with the group, privately determining to substitute a copy for the original. Indeed, he commissioned Baccio Bandinelli to make one, but even this replica never found its way to France.⁴ The King's second request was for the pardon of

¹ Vasari, *op. cit.*, vol. viii. p. 267.

² It has been repeatedly asserted that in the course of these Florentine festivities Machiavelli's "Mandragola" was played before the Pope. But there is no mention of any such performance in the contemporary chronicles, and as we shall presently show, there are documents disproving the assertion.

³ Mignet, "Rivalité," &c., pp. 103, 104 ; Gregorovius, "Geschichte," &c., vol. viii. p. 192.

⁴ Gregorovius, *op. cit.*, vol. viii. p. 191.

Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, who, after having taken pay from the Pope, had come to an understanding with France during the war. But on this point Leo X. was inflexible. He had lost all hope of Naples ; he had been compelled to yield Parma and Piacenza, to promise to yield Modena and Reggio ; he was resolved to be able to count on Urbino for his kinsmen, and he hated the Duke. Therefore his reply was, that he reserved the right of punishing his own subjects according to the nature of their crimes. And the King did not press the matter further.¹

Although just escaped from imminent danger, the Pope was by no means satisfied. He detested France, was burning with a sense of humiliation, and already trying by underhand means to reconcile Maximilian with the Venetians, in order to pave the way for fresh intrigues and fresh breaches of faith. Instead of fulfilling his agreement to cede Modena to the Duke of Ferrara, who was ready to pay for it, he gave him nothing but words. Meanwhile, he was preparing for the campaign on Urbino, which was to be conducted by Lorenzo. The latter was disposed to hesitate, for he recognized the difficulty of the task, but was spurred on by his own ambition, that of his mother Alfonsina, and the impetuosity of the Pope, who protested that he must uphold the honour of the Church against the Duke. If this man, he added, were allowed to escape punishment, every petty baron in the State would rise in rebellion.² He therefore proclaimed the poor Duke guilty of felony. Lorenzo set out at the head of a small army ; was speedily master of the Duchy, and received investiture from the Pope. But very soon the dispossessed lord, being seconded by Othon de Foix, Seigneur of Lantrec, and Governor of Milan, who was highly enraged by the Pope's faithlessness, and with the efficacious aid of Federigo di Bozzolo, a daring captain of adventure, joined him in the command of large bands of mercenaries, left without employment at the close of the last war, and regained possession of his own State amid the acclamations of his people. The Pope in his fury turned appealingly to his allies, but found them indifferent and distrustful. He then hired new captains of adventure, some in his own name, others in that of the Florentines, whom he thus compelled to share the expenses of an enterprise in which they had no concern.

¹ Mignet, *op. cit.*, vol. i. pp. 103, 104 ; Gregorovius, *op. cit.*, vol. viii. p. 192 ; Vettori, "Sommario," &c., p. 315.

² Vettori, "Sommario," p. 319.

The war continued to spread, to the serious injury of the population subjected to the requisitions of all the mercenary troops who, having no other work on hand, had an interest in prolonging it. And when their pay fell into arrears because the Pope appropriated the money for his own pleasures instead, they indemnified themselves by renewed exactions and pillage. Lorenzo retained the chief command of the campaign, but his men paid but little deference to his authority. Nevertheless, he acted as leader in various skirmishes, in one of which he received a wound compelling him to repair to Florence for some weeks of medical treatment before returning to the camp. Francesco Maria della Rovere, reinforced by deserters from the papal army, made frequent incursions and ravages on the enemy's territory. And he would have been victorious, had not his forces been composed of bands of adventurers upon whom no reliance could be placed, for the Spanish troops on either side refused to fight one another in earnest. So at last, wearied, discouraged, and penniless, he decided to surrender his dominions, after obtaining leave, through the intervention of King Francis and King Charles, to carry away his personal property, and above all the library that had been collected by Duke Frederic at an enormous expense. Accordingly, September, 1517, witnessed the conclusion of this unlucky campaign, costing 800,000 ducats, a large part of which sum was debited by the Holy Father to the Florentines, who were but scantily recompensed by the possession of San Leo¹ and the district of Sestino. It was at this moment that Giuliano being now dead, Machiavelli altered the dedication of his "Prince," by addressing it to Lorenzo, who had now learned by experience what was to be expected from mercenary troops, and was at the head of a new State acquired by force of arms and good fortune. But, as we have elsewhere remarked, there is no evidence to show that the little volume was ever presented and accepted.

This war led to serious results. If the Florentines were highly disgusted at the heavy expenses they had been forced to incur, no less was the discontent of the Roman Cardinals, who were so greatly incensed that they planned a conspiracy against the Pope. For this there was accumulated material ready to their hands. Since the April of 1517, Leo X. had only nominated eight new

¹ Capponi, "Storia della Repubblica di Firenze," vol. ii. pp. 324-26; Vettori, "Sommario," pp. 319-22.

Cardinals ; hence the College comprised many adherents of the Della Rovere family, who were naturally much irritated by the persecution waged against Duke Francesco Maria. The College had likewise another motive for still deeper wrath. During his recent stay in Tuscany, the Pope had meddled with Siennese politics, helping on a revolution by which Borghese Petrucci, son of Pandolfo and brother of Cardinal Alfonso, was overthrown and another Petrucci, Borghese's own cousin, put in his place. Now Pandolfo had been an active contributor to the restoration of the Medici in Florence, and the Cardinal had done much towards the election of Leo X. The revolution promoted by the Pope's ingratitude not only drove Cardinal Petrucci from Sienna, but also deprived him of his possessions. He was now in Rome, and so fiercely indignant that he carried a dagger whenever he went out hunting with the Pope, and even when attending Consistory, in the hope of finding opportunity and courage for vengeance. Meanwhile, he sought and gained adherents, and the campaign on Urbino added to their numbers. It was easy for him to win over Cardinal Soderini, who had never forgiven the banishment of his brother the ex-Gonfalonier, although the latter was leading a peaceful and honoured life in Rome, where he died in 1522, and was buried in Santa Maria del Popolo. Neither had he pardoned the non-fulfilment of the projected matrimonial alliance between the houses of Medici and Soderini.

Cardinal Riario, kinsman of the dispossessed Duke of Urbino, being put aside and neglected by the Pope, also threw in his lot with the malcontents. All was prepared, when certain letters from Cardinal Petrucci to his secretary were intercepted, and furnished proofs that the conspiracy was hatched and ready to break out. A surgeon of considerable note, one Battista da Vercelli, who had come to Rome under the pretext of curing the Pope of his fistula, was to administer poison to him. The Cardinals Petrucci, Sauli, and Riario were instantly cast into prison. The first was strangled ; his secretary and the surgeon, who were arrested in Florence, were put to death with horrible cruelty. Cardinal Sauli was allowed to ransom his life, and so too was Cardinal Riario, at the price of 50,000 ducats. Cardinals Soderini and Adriani, being forced to confess their complicity in Consistory, only escaped by paying 12,500 ducats each.

In the course of this trial Leo X. behaved with the utmost perfidy, holding out promises to all for money and keeping faith

with none after receipt of the coin. Accordingly the majority of the incriminated prelates took to flight after paying their ransoms. It was generally believed that the Pope's object was not solely revenge, but also that of reaping pecuniary advantage ; and this idea received decided corroboration when, on June 26, 1517, he nominated a batch of thirty-one Cardinals, exacting from them an enormous sum, said to amount to 500,000 ducats, which was nevertheless insufficient to cover his monstrous current expenses. By this scandalous and wholesale creation of Cardinals, the Pope also sought to fill the College with his own tools, and thus strengthen his position and smooth the way for the future election of Cardinal Giulio, his counsellor and assistant in the lucrative transaction.¹

Meanwhile the Pope was endeavouring to gain some profit from the French by making use of Francesco Vettori, now Florentine Ambassador to their Court ; and with his assistance arranged a marriage between Lorenzo dei Medici and Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne, a lady of royal blood. In March, 1518, Lorenzo made a journey to Amboise, with equal pomp to that displayed by Cæsar Borgia, and bearing gifts to his bride and to the queen valued at the sum of 300,000 ducats. He stood as godfather to the Dauphin, and was the hero of continual festivities, afterwards repeated on his return to Florence, when he again resumed the reins of government. But he had little inclination to remain in that city,² where he was unable to reign independently and had to steer his way between the republican tendencies of the Florentines and the will of the Pope, who wished him to be as docile an instrument in Tuscany as he had previously been at Urbino. In the opinion of Vettori, and the still more explicit judgment of Machiavelli, Lorenzo was by this time convinced that Florence was only to be ruled by civil methods, and therefore had at last found favour with the citizens.³

¹ Gregorovius, "Geschichte," &c., vol. viii. p. 214 ; Capponi, "Storia," &c., vol. ii. p. 326. According to Gregorovius, the number of the new Cardinals was thirty-nine ; but he possibly includes the other eight previously elected. Vettori states that the total number of Cardinals created by Leo X. during his pontificate was forty-two, "and that he obtained money both from those that he elected and those that he condemned." "Sommario," p. 339 ; M. Brosch, "Geschichte der Kirchen Staates," vol. i. p. 50.

² Vettori, "Sommario," p. 527.

³ Vettori, "Sommario," p. 328. An undated fragment of one of Machiavelli's letters, marked No. xv. at p. 29, in vol. viii. of the "Opere," states that Lorenzo had roused much hope in the city, and speaks very highly of his mildness and other good qualities.

But it would seem that it was exactly the need of governing in this fashion, added to the delicacy of his health, which was rapidly failing from long standing disease and continued dissipation, that disgusted him with his post. So he presently went to Rome, where it was evident to all that he was a dying man. He saw no one excepting his brother-in-law, Filippo Strozzi, and a buffoon, and their companionship seemed to be his only consolation during the last hours of his life. He expired on May 4, 1519. Six days earlier his wife had breathed her last after giving birth to a daughter, Caterina dei Medici, afterwards only too famous as the queen who wrought so much evil upon France.

Giuliano having died on March 17, 1516, the legitimate line of Cosimo the elder became extinct at the decease of Lorenzo. There only remained some illegitimate children, such as the Cardinal Giulio, who was now appointed to the government of Florence. He had experience of public business, was prudent and of simple habits, and being an ecclesiastic, and therefore without heirs, there were hopes that it would be easier for him to rule with the moderation and show of liberty so dearly prized by the Florentines. In fact, this was the moment chosen to ask the advice of many influential citizens as to the form of government best adapted to Florence; and among the many views expressed there were included, as we shall see, those of Guicciardini and of Machiavelli. The first, as usual, advised a government concentrated in the hands of a few trusty counsellors; the second a government established on popular favour, after the plan that he had always advocated.¹ But all these discussions ended in talk.

Meanwhile, the affairs of Europe were involved in new and serious complications, and although the Pope had no longer to study the interests of his brother Giuliano, or nephew Lorenzo, yet he still yearned with the same avidity for Parma, Piacenza, Ferrara, and Perugia, and now coveted them for the States of the Church. An attempt made against Ferrara, towards the end of 1519, resulted in failure. But in the following year he succeeded in a sudden attack on Perugia, during the absence of its ruler, Giovan Paolo Baglioni. For although up to that moment this despot had always acted like a fox and a wolf combined, he now

¹ Guicciardini, "*Opere Inedite*," vol. ii. p. 325; Machiavelli, "*Opere*," vol. iv. p. 105; Capponi, "*Storia*," &c., vol. ii. p. 328.

let himself be entrapped like a lamb ; and the Pope, having seduced him by flattery, imprisoned, and afterwards beheaded him in the Castle of Sant' Angelo, in June, 1520.

The death of Maximilian I. occurred during this period, at the beginning of 1519, and King Charles and King Francis I. immediately began their contest for the imperial crown. The Pope being unfavourable to the election of either, negotiated secretly with both, and hoped for the success of some secondary German potentate. Although the ally of France, he had, early in 1519, come to a secret agreement with Charles that was to be binding for life ; but it appears that the moment he was informed of Maximilian's decease, he refused to sign it, and concluded instead a treaty of capitulation with Francis I., whose election he then pretended to favour. There was also some rumour of another secret arrangement with Francesco Maria Sforza, son of the Moor, and heir presumptive to Lombardy, which was still in the hands of the French. It was asserted that Sforza would yield up everything to Cardinal Giulio, in exchange for the latter's purple, his chancellorship, and benefices bringing in a yearly revenue of fifty thousand ducats.¹

But on June 28, 1519, Charles was elected Emperor, as the fifth of that name. Young, ambitious, [of great political and military talent, he now added to the power of the Empire the sovereignty of Spain, the Low Countries, and the kingdom of Naples ; it was to be foreseen that in a short time he would be arbiter of the fate of Europe. Accordingly, the Pope was increasingly anxious to ally himself with France ; he had indeed already signed the treaty and despatched it to Francis, who delayed adhering to it from fear of the Pontiff's accustomed duplicity. Then, without loss of time, he came to an agreement with Charles V., who not only promised to defend the States of the Florentines and the Church, but even to cede him the coveted provinces of Parma and Piacenza, and to assist him against the Duke of Ferrara. Milan was to be reconquered and bestowed on Francesco Maria Sforza ; the Cardinal Giulio, promoter and arranger of this treaty, was to be rewarded by a pension from the bishopric of Toledo, and another pension was stipulated for the boy Alexander, Duke Lorenzo's illegitimate son.²

¹ Capponi, "*Storia*," &c., vol. ii. pp. 329-32. See also the documents in Appendix of the same volume, pp. 535-46.

² Capponi, "*Storia*," &c., vol. ii. pp. 329-32.

There was much discussion on the motives that could have induced the Pope to throw himself thus suddenly into the arms of so powerful a potentate, and to render him still more powerful by abandoning the French king with whom he had just formed a bond of relationship. It was urged by some that he had acted with the object of strengthening the hand of Charles V. against the Reformation, which was now assuming threatening proportions. But those who best understood the Pope refused all credence in similar conjectures, inclining to think him solely urged by reasons of personal interest, to wit, his perennial thirst for the acquisition of Parma and Piacenza, refused by Francis I., and now promised him by Charles. So says Vettori, who had then been ambassador both to Rome and France.¹ Guicciardini also steadfastly denies that the Pope was animated on this head by any real anxiety for religion, and even declares him responsible for the progress of the Reformation, owing to the indecency with which he promoted the sale of indulgences for the dead and the living, for the sole purpose of making money. Indignation reached its height, he says, when ministers of religion were seen to sell at a low price, or even gamble away in taverns, the right of freeing dead men's souls from purgatory, and when it was known that the Pope had, with incredible frivolity, granted to his sister Maddalena the emoluments on the traffic in indulgences in many parts of Germany.² "The Pope," he concludes elsewhere, "was probably moved by his desire for Parma, Piacenza, and Ferrara; perhaps by the dread of seeing the two sovereigns join against him, and possibly, too, by the hope of achieving some great result before he died. Cardinal dei Medici, who knows all the Pope's secrets, told me that he hoped first, with the aid of Charles V., to expel the French from Genoa and Milan; then, with the aid of the French, to drive Charles V. out of Naples, thus realizing the triumph of Italian independence, to which his predecessor had manifestly aspired. He well knew that his own strength was insufficient for success, and that it might not be easy to win the alliance of the power he had first combated; nevertheless, he hoped that at the fitting moment he might be able, by the election of French cardinals and other fair means, to induce the king to help him and almost enjoy the spectacle of seeing the same fate befall Cæsar that had befallen himself."³

¹ Vettori, "Sommario," pp. 334, 335.

² Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," vol. vi. pp. 216, 217.

³ Ibid., vol. vii. p. 5.

Nor should this cause us any surprise. Although constantly impelled by personal aims, Leo X. was also very aspiring. No longer having heirs to provide for, it was easier for him to be brought to conceive, although never more than superficially, some grandiose design fitted to make him descend to posterity as a princely deliverer. Hence he now allowed it to be supposed, perhaps even believed for a moment himself, that he meant to re-establish the Florentine Republic; then feigned a desire to liberate Italy from her invaders and make her a united country. It was this great, although most mutable, ambition of his that continually deceived Machiavelli; who, being always inflamed by political ideals, was always ready to hope. It was thus that the secretary had been inspired to write his "Prince," and had despatched so many letters to Vettori and others in order to feed the flame. But whenever seeming to burn most brightly, the fire always expired on a sudden without leaving a spark behind.

The Pope had vacillated even to the very last hour with Charles, but this monarch brought him to the point by the threat of convoking a Council; and so at last, on May 29, 1521, the treaty was signed and the war instantly began. Together with the Florentines, Leo had 600 men-at-arms in readiness; Marquis Pescara, Ferdinando d'Avalos was marching the same number from Naples with the addition of 2,000 foot soldiers. In the Imperial camp there were 2,000 Spaniards, 4,000 Italians, and as many Germans and Swiss. Francesco Guicciardini, papal governor of Reggio, sent 10,000 ducats to Marone, who was stationed at Trent with Francesco Maria Sforza and the Milanese exiles, in readiness to march to the attack of the French near Parma. Nevertheless, there was great and general mistrust of the Pope; it was feared that as soon as he gained what he wanted, he would leave his friends to their fate; furthermore, it was well known that even the Florentines fought unwillingly against the soldiers of France, on account of their extensive commercial relations with that country. But, on the other hand, the French were very badly led; their best generals, such as the Constable de Bourbon, and the veteran Trivulzio, having fallen into disgrace and been driven from the camp by means of court cabals. The army was now commanded by Odetto de Foix, Seigneur of Lautrec, whose chief merit consisted in being brother to Countess Châteaubriant, the mistress of the king. Accordingly, the Imperial captains led their troops into Mantuan territory, and after crossing first the Po and then

the Adda, joined forces with the Swiss, who had arrived before them, and moved together upon Milan, which was quickly taken, as Lautrec was quite incompetent for its defence.¹

Leo X. was staying in his villa of Magliana when, on the 28th November, he received this happy news, and celebrated it with much rejoicing. It was winter; he had a fire in his room, and he continually went to open the window, to watch the merry-making of his attendants in honour of the victory. This sufficed to bring on a violent attack of fever, to which he succumbed on the 1st December. Rumour, as usual, hinted at poison, and many unfounded hypotheses were started; but his repeated exposure to sudden changes of temperature was more than enough to cause the fever that killed him. Vettori remarked, that it was wonderful that he should have lived so long. Although only forty-six years of age, he had by no means a strong constitution. "His head was so large as to be but ill-proportioned to the size of his body, and was always choked with catarrh; neither could he be said to be of regular living, inasmuch as he sometimes fasted too rigorously, and at others, on the contrary, ate to excess. His life had abounded in vicissitudes; but the eight concluding years of it were in truth most fortunate, both on account of his restoration to Florence, his election, and the whole of his pontificate, during which the greater errors which he committed, the kinder was fortune in repairing them, since even the conspiracy of the Cardinals enabled him to renew the Sacred College and fill it with his own friends. He disliked trouble, and yet brought much upon himself by the continual desire to aggrandize his kindred; but fortune, by way of an additional favour, even freed him of this anxiety, by depriving him of his nephew as well as his brother."² And after this Vettori is unable to decide whether there was more to praise than to blame in Pope Leo X. Guicciardini, too, confines himself to saying that his character afforded much occasion for both, since he had proved more prudent and less good than had been previously expected.³ The courtiers shed tears on his loss, but for this they were assailed by pungent satires, and some one wrote from Rome saying that the

¹ Guicciardini, "*Storia d'Italia*," vol. vii. pp. 40-67; Vettori, "*Sommario*," pp. 334, 335; Gregorovius, "*Geschichte*," &c., vol. viii. pp. 261-65; Mignet, "*Rivalité*," &c., vol. i. p. 287 and fol.; De Leva, "*Storia di Carlo V.*," vol. vii. chap. ii.

² Vettori, "*Sommario*," pp. 336-40.

³ Guicciardini, "*Storia d'Italia*," vol. vii. p. 71.

Pope had died in very bad odour, and that no one had commended his departing soul save Fra Mariano the buffoon.¹

Undoubtedly his character presented many contradictions. Amidst the greatest political events, during the course of sanguinary and repeated wars, while the Reformation was dividing and lacerating the Church, Leo X. not only passed his time among artists and men of letters, but gave even more of his society to *improvisatori*, singers and jesters. Fond of music, and very vain of his vocal powers, he took part in the performances of his courtiers, showering generous gifts on those who accompanied his singing. He frequently played at chess and cards with his cardinals; but his chief delight was to listen to improvisations of Latin verse, and he also enjoyed measuring himself against others in this pastime, and scoffing at those who considered themselves poets merely because they had the knack of spinning bad rhymes. These histrionic poets of his were many in number. Among them Andrea Morone of Brescia was celebrated for his declamation and his skill in accompanying himself on the violin. He is supposed to have been the original of Raphael's famous violin player. Another, Camillo Querno by name, had written a poem in twenty thousand verses of such sort that the Roman Academy conferred upon him a crown of cabbage and laurel, and, as a still greater mark of contempt, the title of *arch-poet*. The Pope was accustomed to feed this man with tit-bits, and to let him drink from his own glass, watering the wine if the verses went badly, but when they pleased him capping them by improvisations of his own.

"Archipoeta facit versus pro mille poetis," said Querno, and the Pope, filling up his glass, instantly replied: "Et pro mille aliis archipoeta bibit." Querno asked for wine, saying: "Porrige quod faciat mihi carmina docta, Falernum," whereupon the Pope reminded him that wine brought on gout: "Hoc etiam enervat debilitatque pedes." Contests of the same kind would often be carried on between the Holy Father and any fair dame chancing to be at Court who had the gift of improvising in Latin. One day the gallant Pope finding himself surrounded by ladies, repeated half a line from Virgil, saying: "Now indeed I may call myself 'formosī gregis pastor;'" whereupon one of readier wit than the rest completed the line by exclaiming, "formosior ipse."²

¹ Gregorovius, "Geschichte," &c., vol. viii. p. 262

² Settembrini, "Lezioni di letteratura Italiana," vol. ii. pp. 36, 37; Tiraboschi, "Storia della Letteratura Italiana," tom. vii. pp. 15-17. Vide at the end of the same volume: Fr. Arsilli Senogalliensis, "De Poetis urbanis ad Paulum Jovium."

Another atrocious poetaster, Barabello, who was sixty years of age and thought himself a second Petrarch, was the continual laughing stock of the Pope and his Court without ever being conscious of it. On one occasion they made him believe that he was to be crowned at the Capitol, and led him through the streets in procession, dressed in ancient costume and mounted on an elephant, amid the acclamations of the people. But on reaching the bridge of St. Angelo, they brought the farce to a sudden end on some slight pretext, leaving the poor man undeceived and highly bewildered.¹

The chief expenses of this Pontiff, who, with a revenue of 420,000 ducats, was always in debt, were incurred for his table, at which he entertained poets, courtiers, singers, buffoons, real or supposititious relations, and above all Florentines. "For Pope Julius II.," says the Venetian Orator, "about four thousand ducats per month were sufficient; but even eight or nine thousand ducats were not enough for Leo X. on account of the vast expense of his table, and this was principally owing to the large number of Florentines fed at his board."² We have said that he seldom indulged in excess, being too epicurean in his tastes; but his dinners furnished occasion for a thousand devices, a thousand practical jokes. At one time he would serve his parasites with the flesh of monkeys or crows, at another, on the contrary, with the choicest viands. He often quitted the city and went out sporting in the dress of a layman with his eyeglass in hand; at other times he would fish in the lake of Bolsena, or stay at Magliana where he had very beautiful gardens. And wherever he was, whether in the public ways at his villa, in the Vatican, and even in his sleeping chamber, he was attended by a swarm of poets, *litterati*, artists and singers; nor did this cause him any annoyance, for, on the contrary, he loved to be always surrounded and courted by a crowd. The Pope also took great delight in theatrical performances, and was an energetic promoter and encourager of the stage, undoubtedly helping on its progress in those days. The plays of Trissino, Rucellai, and Ariosto were frequently acted in his presence; so, too, the famous and indecent "Calandria" of Bibbiena, one of his chief favourites and for which Baldassare Peruzzi painted the scenery in 1518. In 1519 Ariosto's play,

¹ Reumont, "Geschichte der Stadt Rom," vol. iii. part ii. pp. 131, 132.

² Albéri, the already quoted "Relazione" of Marin Giorgi, pp. 56, 57. Other contemporaries repeat the same statement.

"I Suppositi," was performed at the Castle of St. Angelo in the apartments of Cardinal Cibo, nephew to the Pope. But it was the Pope himself who bore the expense of the entertainment, and therefore played the host, receiving and bestowing his blessing on the guests. On entering the theatre he took his seat in a prominent place and looked through his glass long and admiringly at the drop scene painted by Raphael. The curtain was decorated with a portrait of Frà Mariano, the buffoon, surrounded by tormenting devils. After the performance, a splendid supper was given to the Cardinals, cavaliers and ladies, and the Pope enjoyed himself very much among the latter.¹

It is a curious fact that, with all the talent and taste of which Leo X. was the undoubted possessor ; with all his desire to play, as he did, the Mæcenas on a grand scale, he should have been almost always surrounded by very mediocre *literati* in an age productive of so many noble intellects. Among the best of his courtiers were Bembo, Sadoleto, Molza, and Rucellai, and these, although possessed of much ability, were by no means men of genius ; nearly all the rest were beneath mediocrity, often mere pedants or downright buffoons. Leo X. had neither the glory nor good fortune to promote any one of the great literary enterprises of his day. The histories and political writings of Guicciardini and Machiavelli owed positively nothing to his assistance, although the latter was frequently stirred by the hope of gaining his favour, and the former was much employed by him in State affairs. The greatest poet of the age, Lodovico Ariosto, with whom the Pope, when Cardinal, had been very intimate and lavish of generous offers, obtained nothing but empty words when he came to Rome. Leo received him with a great show of affection, and kissed him on both cheeks ; but all ended there. So at this time the poet wrote : "I am like the magpie who having discovered a small spring of water in a time of great drought, had to let all drink before him : his master and his kin, servants, cattle and useful animals, so that at last the poor bird was left to die of thirst. Thus there is no hope for me in Rome."

" Li nipoti e i parenti, che son tanti,
Prima hanno a ber ; poi quei che lo aiutaro

¹ Reumont, "Geschichte der Stadt Rom," vol. iii. pp. 133, 134. This entertainment is minutely described in a well-known epistle of the Ferrarese Ambassador. *Vide* also E. Muntz, "Raphael, sa vie, son œuvre, et son temps," pp. 421, 422. Paris, Hachette, 1881.

A vestirsi.
 Se fin che tutti beano aspetto a trarme
 La volontà di bere, o me di sete
 O secco il pozzo veder d'acqua parme.
 Meglio è star nella solita quiete,
 Che provar s'egli è ver che qualungere erge
 Fortuna in alto, il tuffa prima in Lete."¹

It was very different with the fine arts. Nevertheless the Pope did but little for architecture and sculpture. He neglected Michel Angelo, made him waste much time in selecting blocks of marble at Carrara, set him to carve columns and execute many works which, being uncongenial to his genius, were never completed, and sometimes not even begun.

The celebrated monuments to Lorenzo and Giuliano dei Medici, executed at this period and erected in the sacristy of S. Lorenzo in Florence, were owed to the initiative, not of the Pope but of Cardinal Giulio. Leo X. interested himself in the building of St. Peter's, which had been started with so much ardour by his predecessor, and, in order to carry it on, scandalized the whole of the Christian world by the sale of indulgences in Germany. But the money collected by this unworthy means was more efficacious in hastening the outbreak of the Reformation, than in promoting the construction of the mighty temple, which indeed progressed more slowly than under former Popes who had devoted themselves to it in earnest. But no one can deny the great encouragement given by Leo X. to painting, and especially to the works of Raphael, whom he patronized and loved so sincerely as to have serious thoughts of raising him to the purple. It is true that even as regards painting, the Pope only carried on the great undertakings previously begun by Julius II. ; but it is certain that in these years, Raphael was incited by his encouragement and appreciation to produce a positively enormous number of masterpieces, which although conferring immortality on the painter's name, shortened his life, and increased the general lamentation for his premature decease.

At the time of the election of Leo X., Raphael was at work on the Hall of Heliodorus, and no sooner was this finished than he began the Destruction of Borgo. The themes now given to the painter were of a more limited, narrower, and we might say, of a

¹ Ariosto, *Satira iv.*, verses 154 and fol. in the "*Opere Minori*" (Le Monnier edition), vol. i. p. 184 and fol.

more personal range, owing to the greater vanity of the new Pope, who desired the allusions to himself to be much too transparent. Accordingly his figure is always obtruded in the foreground, sometimes no little to the injury of the artist's noble conceptions. During these years Raphael took in hand the walls of the Vatican Loggie, constructed by the architect Bramante, and covered them with ornate designs, arabesques, and different compositions, painted by his scholars, but under his direction and from his own designs. He was thus the inventor of a new style, inspired by works of antiquity, but nevertheless the distinct outcome of his own fancy and of the Italian Renaissance. Indeed, these arabesques may be regarded as the fitting and æsthetic framework of the period. He likewise painted the St. Cecilia and the Spasimo; made the admirable designs for the legend of Psyche in the Farnesina palace, afterwards painted by his best pupils, and completed a very large number of portraits. It was also during the pontificate of Leo X. that he produced the Madonna of San Sisto and the Transfiguration, undoubtedly two of the grandest of his works; and the same Pope gave him an appointment almost equivalent to that of director in chief of all the Fine Arts and of all excavations. He therefore employed much time in surveying and sketching the old monuments of Rome, and superintending excavations for the discovery of others. And with the aid of Fulvio Antiquario, he undertook the difficult task of a complete plan of ancient Rome, based on careful study of its buildings. He left a report on this subject, that was long attributed to Baldassare Castiglione, and actually published under his name, but afterwards recognized as the work of Raphael.¹ It is impossible to realize how the energies of one man could have been equal to so much labour; it is easy to understand how he came to die in the year 1520 at the early age of thirty-seven.

It can excite no surprise that Leo X. should have lavished treasures in the promotion of works of similar quantity and quality; and when it is added that although very liberal in all his transactions with Raphael and artists in general, he was still more generous towards his singers, players, and parasites,² it will not seem astonishing that his splendid revenues should have been in-

¹ Calcagnini wrote of him as follows:

"Nunc Romam in Roma querit, reperitque Raphael,
Querere magni hominis, sed reperire Dei est."

² *Vide* on this head E. Muntz, "Raphael," &c., chap. xii. p. 426 and fol.

sufficient to cover his expenses. Alexander VI. and even Julius II. habitually appropriated the fortunes of all prelates who died in Rome, and for this purpose Alexander frequently resorted to the expedient of procuring their death by poison or the dagger. Leo X., however, being far more humane in such respects, never committed this iniquity, and thus from all sides people thronged to Rome to enjoy the gay life of the city, its novel tranquility and the generous protection of its ruler. But the Pope left a vast accumulation of debts at his decease. He owned 200,000 ducats to the Bini bank, 32,000 to the Gaddi, to the Ricasoli 10,000, to Cardinal Salviati 80,000, to Cardinal Santi Quattro 150,000, and as much to Cardinal Armellini. The Strozzi were on the point of failure, and many of Leo's intimates ruined. The treasury of the Apostolic Chamber was so empty that there was not enough in it to purchase a new bier, and thus it fell out that one previously used for the burial of Cardinal Riario had to serve for the obsequies of the most splendid of the successors of St. Peter.¹

¹ Gregorovius, "Geschichte," &c., vol. viii. pp. 260-262. For particulars touching this Pope, besides the well-known works of Roscoe, Ranke, Gregorovius and Reumont, there may now be consulted the new works to which we have occasionally referred; *i.e.*, "Raphael, sa vie," &c., by E. Muntz, and the "Geschichte des Kirchen Staates" of Brosch. The latter author gives a brief account of the life of Leo X. at the beginning of his book.





CHAPTER VII.

Machiavelli and his family in the country—His children—His correspondence with his nephew Giovanni Vernacci—His journey to Genoa—The Oricellarii Gardens—The "Discourses" of Guicciardini—"Discourse on the reform of the Florentine government"—The mission to Lucca—"Summary of the affairs of Lucca"—"The Life of Castruccio Castracani."



THE literary fashions in vogue at the court of Leo X. might have shown Machiavelli the expediency of turning to the composition of verses, satires, and comedies. Such works would certainly have proved more lucrative to him ; and in various attempts he had already shown a gift in that direction, of which he gave still better proofs at a later date. We have seen how he wrote his "Decades" while engaged in a multiplicity of affairs, barely leaving him time for necessary repose ; we have seen how after his disgrace he passed a great part of his days beside a spring in the shade of his woods studying the Latin and Italian poets. And from a letter dated 17th of December, 1517, written by him to Lodovico Alamanni in Rome, we not only learn that he had just read Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso" with great admiration, but that he complained of not being included among the many poets therein mentioned ; adding that he was engaged upon a poem called "L'Asino,"¹ in which he should certainly render justice to the eminent merits of Ariosto. This poem, containing many satirical allusions to Machiavelli's contemporaries, was soon put aside, and although at this period he undoubtedly wrote more verses and other purely literary works, they were not compositions.

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. Letter xlvii.

of any length. His spirit was too sadly disturbed by recent events in Florence, and his own misfortunes ; his mind still pre-occupied by reminiscences and memories of the past ; his attention too earnestly absorbed in meditation on the events daily agitating all Europe and threatening Italy. Hence it was only in political writing that he found any solace, since this alone could take possession of his soul, and by absorbing all his faculties, succeed in bringing him oblivion of the miserable state of life to which he was condemned.

He remained therefore in his rustic abode, and employed his time in giving polishing touches to the "Prince," continuing the "Discourses," and completing the "Art of War." In this little villa, situated among the hills at several hours' distance from Florence, he seemed to be imprisoned among woods and fields, and exiled from the native city that had been the scene of all his activities and joys, of his perished hopes and his calamities. He felt himself, as it were, isolated from the world, and sought for peace in solitude and study. Yet whenever he looked towards the north, he had a glimpse, between the curves of the gracious hills, of the dome, the belfry and the Palace tower that continually reminded him of the past and never allowed him to forget the present. At that time he was the parent of five children, four boys and a girl. Bernardo, the eldest, was born on the 8th of November,¹ 1503 ; Pietro, the youngest, on the 4th of September, 1514.² Of the three intermediate children, Lodovico, Guido, and Bartolommea, the age is not certified. But, in short, the family was numerous, the patrimony very scanty, and these children caused anxiety. One or two, like Pietro, who afterwards led an adventurous military life, were still of very tender years. Guido was as yet in his boyhood ; or, as we shall see by a letter of his dated 1527, he was still studying grammar. Of very gentle disposition, he embraced the ecclesiastical and literary career, but

¹ This is the date given in Passerini ("Opere" (P. M.), vol. i. p. l.), in many other writers, and that is confirmed in Libro iii. dell' Età (in Cod. 106, S. Spirito, Gonfalone Nicchio) in the "Archivio delle Tratte" at Florence.

² Passerini gives the date of 14th of December, 1514, but as usual omits to quote the document from which the information was derived. In the life of Pietro, written by his brother Guido, that is to be found among the "Carte del Machiavelli" (Case v. No. 188), and published by Signor Amico at the end of his "Vita di N. Machiavelli," we are told instead that Pietro was born the 4th of September, 1514, *dum sol oriebatur*. This date is also confirmed by the epitaphs, composed for the same Pietro by his brother Guido (Case v. No. 170 and fol.).

never rose above mediocrity.¹ Of Bernardo, who was considerably his senior, very little is known. But a sentence of punishment pronounced against him in 1528 for blasphemy at the gambling table, and for an attempted outrage on a woman of the neighbourhood, gives us no good opinion of his character.² And Lodovico, next in age to Bernardo, was of a very violent disposition. One of his letters, dated 14th of August, 1525,³ introduces us to him at Adrianople, where he was engaged in commerce, and living in the midst of continual strife, always wrathful and panting for revenge. Already in the same year he had been several times punished by the Eight for his share in riots, resulting in bloodshed on both sides. Nor were these quarrels in honourable causes; one of them having been excited by jealousy for a woman of evil life.⁴ Later he was able, at least partially, to redeem his character by fighting and losing his life in defence of liberty, during the siege of Florence.⁵ But in the meantime he was certainly one of the sons causing most anxiety to their father. Of the girl Bartolommea, or Baccia, afterwards married to one of the Ricci, we know very little; but from the second will drawn up by Machiavelli, in 1522, we learn that he thought of ensuring her a dowry in the *Monte delle Fanciulle*, but had not yet succeeded in doing so.

Even Marietta, his wife, remains very much in the background. We have only a single letter of hers, written to Machiavelli in Rome, shortly after the birth of one of her children. Unfortunately it has no date; but certainly belongs to an earlier period

¹ In the above-mentioned Case v. there are several of Guido's literary compositions.

² On the 22nd of November he had been condemned by the Eight to a year's relegation, three miles distant from Florence, and to a fine of 150 *lire*. So says Signor Amico at p. 613. But as he gives no precise indications we have failed to discover the original sentence in the Archives.

³ To be found with another, dated 22nd of May, 1527, among the "Carte del Machiavelli," Case v. Nos. 46 and 22. *Vide* Appendix of Italian edition, document i. There could have been no great interval between the birth of Bernardo and of Lodovico, since they were both balloted at the same time for the Gonfalone di Nicchio (Reg. orig. of the Ballot of 1524, at c. 12). On the 8th of June, 1517, Machiavelli wrote to his nephew Giovanni Vernacchi: "Bernardo and Lodovico are reaching manhood." *Vide* Appendix of Italian edition, document iii.

⁴ These sentences also are recorded by Amico at p. 614. We have only discovered in the Archives the first, dated 11th of May, 1525. It is among the decrees of the Eight (May and August, 1525, at c. 6r). In this Lodovico is sentenced to pay two gold florins, for having thrashed a notary.

⁵ This fact is mentioned by the historians of the siege.

than the times now under notice. It is written in a spirit of sincere affection, we may even say of love, towards her husband. She complains of the infrequency of his letters, and reminds him that he well knows that she is never in good spirits when he is away from her, and less than ever now that she hears that there is much sickness in Rome. "Imagine if I can be happy when I can rest neither by night nor day. The baby is well and resembles you. He is as white as snow, but his head is like a bit of black velvet, and he is hairy as you are. And his resemblance to you makes me think him beautiful, and he is as lively as though he were a year old, and he opened his eyes before he was quite born, and made his voice heard all over the house. Our little girl is not at all well. Be sure to come back."¹ All the family letters still extant clearly prove that Marietta remained an affectionate wife and mother to the close of her life. And although we have not one of Machiavelli's letters to her, yet it is plain from the tenour of those written to his children, that, notwithstanding a few infidelities, some real and some merely imaginary, he too loved his wife to the last, and was a much better man in his own home than he wishes us to suppose.

There exists another correspondence of his of the same epoch with Giovanni Vernacci, son of his sister Primerana, who had gone to Pera on commercial business. This correspondence allows us occasional glimpses of the deep sadness by which Machiavelli

¹ This letter was first given to the world by Signor Innocenzo Giamperi, in his book on the "Monumenti del Giardino Puccini" (Pistoia, 1845), see p. 288, and afterwards in a "Strenna Poliantea con l'Almanacco delle Dame," for the year 1846, p. 43 (Florence, Grand Ducal Press). It was also republished by Amico and Mordenti, but in every case very incorrectly. All give it the date of 1524, by an erroneous interpretation of the original manuscript, which only says, *on the 24th day*. It may be conjectured that the letter was written in 1506. At that time Machiavelli was absent on his second Legation to Rome, and although, as he was bound to follow the travels of Julius II., there is no reason to suppose that he was staying in the city, yet all letters to him were sent to Rome, on account of his being accredited to that Court. The fact of his being perpetually on the move would also explain the scarcity of his letters to his family, so much complained of by Marietta. The baby must have been Lodovico, who, as we have seen, was probably the third-born; while the little girl to whom allusion is made, must have been Bartolommea. There is no reason to think that the letter could have been written in 1503, during Machiavelli's first mission to Rome, for at that time he had only one child, a son. Nor can it be of the year 1524, for although he then spent a few days near Rome and at Civita Vecchia, no child was born to him in that year, nor was Bartolommea still in her childhood. In document ii. of Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition we give Marietta's letter in its original form.

was then oppressed, and also of the genuine and lively affection maintained between uncle and nephew. The former, as we have seen elsewhere, confided all his troubles to Vernacci from the very beginning, then in the August of 1513, gave him loving counsels, and told him how, in addition to the other calamities of that most unlucky year, he had suffered the loss of a little girl, who had only lived for three days after her birth.¹ In 1514, Machiavelli wrote to him on business matters, and proposed arranging a marriage for him; on the 17th of August, 1515, he made excuses for not writing more frequently, "because the times are of a sort to make me forget myself. Yet I never forget thee, and always love thee as my own son, and myself and my belongings are ever at thy disposal."² His letters were often lost on the way to the East; whereupon the nephew would write again complaining of his uncle's silence, and Machiavelli was obliged to reiterate the same assurances of affection. "The loss of my letters will make thee think that I have forgotten thee, but this is by no means the case, inasmuch as fate has left me nothing but my family and friends, and to these I cling. And if I do not write with much greater frequency, it is because I have grown useless to myself, my relations and friends, for so has my painful destiny willed it. The only good thing left to me is my sound health and that of all my family."³ Later, in 1517, he wrote to him again, and also made his sons write; but, as usual, the letters miscarried, and he therefore sent him another epistle on the 5th of January, 1518. Of the latter he made two copies and gave them to two different persons, and wrote all this in detail to his nephew on the 25th of the same month.⁴ And on the 8th of June he told him that he loved him more than ever now that "he had proved himself a good and worthy man. Indeed I am proud of thee, since I brought thee up. As in old times my house is always at thy service, although it be but a poor and comfortless place."⁵ No

¹ *Vide* at document iii. of Appendix (III.) of Italian edition a letter dated 4th of August, 1513, the original of which is in the Royal Library of Parma. We are indebted to the librarian's kindness for the copy in our possession.

² *Vide* document iii. of Appendix (III.) of Italian edition. Letter dated 20th of April, 1514, and "Opere," vol. viii. Letter xlii. (dated 17th of August, 1515) p. 150.

³ "Opere," vol. viii. p. 151. Letters xliii. and xliv. (dated 19th of November, 1515, and 15th of February, 1516).

⁴ *Vide* document iii. of Appendix (III.) of Italian edition. Letters of the 5th and 25th of January, 1518. ⁵ "Opere," vol. viii. Letter xlv., p. 152.

less affectionate were the letters of the nephew. On the 31st of October, 1517, he wrote as usual for news of his uncle and the family, complaining that none had reached him for the last twelve months. "You no longer think of me as a beloved nephew. Yet as I still love you with a filial affection, I hope that if you may have lost your pen and paper for writing to me, you will not have lost the love you have so long borne me."¹ It is clear from other letters that the uncle's love for the nephew consisted of more than mere words, for in the midst of numerous worries, Machiavelli often found time to attend to the affairs of the attached and distant kinsman who placed such entire confidence in him.²

Such then was the real man, so long held up to us as a monster, alike incapable of any delicate feeling, honesty, or genuine affection.

In the meantime he continued to work and struggle against adversity and trouble, proving himself ready for any task by which he might honestly earn an addition to the family purse. In April, 1518, he went to Genoa to arrange the affairs of certain Florentine traders, by collecting their credits in that city, amounting to several thousand crowns, and then returned to his villa.³ From time to time, however, he went down into Florence, where he still had a house, upon some business requiring his attention, and where, hostile fortunes notwithstanding, he yet retained a few trusty friends, whose society gave him consolation.

As the times had gradually grown quieter, there had again sprung up in the city a few of those literary associations so general throughout Italy in the sixteenth century, forming an essential element of society in those days, and counting among the most delightful and valued pleasures of all Florentines of culture. The best renowned association at this period was the one holding its sittings in the Oricellarii Gardens, and attended by many of the first *litterati* of Florence and Italy.

Bernardo Rucellai, who flourished in the second half of the fifteenth century, was the author of some Latin satires, a partizan of the Medici, and a rich and influential citizen, purchased,

¹ *Vide* document iv. of Appendix (III.) of Italian edition. The original letter is to be found in the Archivio Bargagli.

² *Vide* Letter of the 15th of April, 1520, first published by Prof. A. D'Ancona, and bearing the number lv. at p. 1194 of the Usigli edition of the "Opere," published in Florence, 1857. *Vide* also document iv. of Appendix (III.) of Italian edition, Vernacci's letter, dated 8th of May, 1521.

³ *Vide* document v. in Appendix (III.) of Italian edition.

towards the end of the century, an orchard in Via della Scala, spent much money in building a splendid palace in it, and laid out a still more splendid garden, that was soon renowned for the beauty of its trees. At the present time we can still judge for ourselves of the palace and garden, and putting aside the strange colossal statue of Polyphemus, erected at a later date by the Medici, and sundry small stone buildings added in our days, and in curious contrast with their antique surroundings, we can form a sufficiently exact idea of the former character of the place. The trees are still in full luxuriance, and their shade still seems to invite us to thought and conversation. Between their leafy branches we still behold the elegant and harmonious lines of the old palace, which is of the severe architectural type of the school of Filippo Brunelleschi and Leon Battista Alberti. The spacious halls on the ground floor are still open, as a sure refuge from midday heats or passing showers.¹ Here it were easy to forget the present, evoke the shadows of the past, and listen in imagination to the voices of those who so frequently met in this spot and whose names are so often recorded in history. Bernardo Rucellai, the founder of this pleasant resort, died in 1514.

The years immediately preceding and following 1512 had been too turbulent to leave any leisure for peaceful intellectual intercourse ; therefore in those days the gardens were little frequented. Of Cosimo, Bernardo's immediate successor, history makes scanty mention, although it has a great deal to tell us of the second-born, Palla Rucellai, who filled high offices of the State, and was a zealous adherent of the Medici nearly all his life, only deserting their cause in 1537. Another brother, Giovanni, also, like the rest of the Rucellai, a friend of the Medici, to whom indeed they were bound by ties of kindred, devoted himself to letters with great success, and was the well-known author of the tragedy "Rosmunda," and of the poem "Le Api." Being the disciple and friend of the first *litterati* of Florence, he began to gather them about him ; but afterwards, when aspiring to the purple, naturally repaired to Rome to the court of Leo X., his cousin and friend. Assuming the ecclesiastical habit, and being made a prelate, he

¹ *Vide* the "Curiosità storico-artistiche fiorentine," by Count Luigi Passerini (series i. Florence, Jouhaud, 1866), the portion entitled: "Degli Orti Oricellarii." The author remarks that the site of the palace only having been purchased in 1482, when L. B. Alberti was already dead, it is impossible that, as many have asserted, the latter could have been the architect employed by Rucellai.

passed the greater part of his time in Rome, remaining there even under Clement VII., who nominated him governor of the castle of St. Angelo, an office preserved by him to his death, which took place in 1525, just when he was hoping for higher promotion.

Consequently, although the Rucellai palace had been much frequented for some time, the first member of the family to organize regular meetings in the Orti was Bernardo, Cosimo's son, who, being born in 1495, the same year that his father died, afterwards adopted his name and was known to all as Cosimino. He dedicated himself to literature, composed poetry, showed great kindness and generosity towards all his friends, and gave great hopes of his future. But he suffered from a painful disease brought on by youthful excesses, and unskilful treatment had reduced him to so crippled a condition, that he was always obliged to lie stretched in a sort of cradle, or be carried about on a litter. This misfortune, added to his affability of manner, kindly nature and active intellect, drew around him all the best friends of the Rucellai family. And they constantly visited him, in the certainty that he was always to be found either in the house or garden, where alone he could breathe the outer air.¹

Two of the most assiduous frequenters of these meetings were Zanobi Buondelmonti and Luigi di Piero Alamanni. The latter was a poet considerably known by his lyrics, his poems of chivalry, and above all by his poetical work "*La Coltivazione*," in which he had sought to imitate the *Georgics* of Virgil and given proof of much elegance and an easy though somewhat monotonous style. These two youths, who afterwards proved themselves ardent promoters of liberty, were at that time friends of the Medici, like the majority of the circle frequenting the Oricellarii Gardens.² Two cousins also were frequent visitors, and these having both the same name of Francesco da Diacceto were distinguished by the colour of their clothes, as the Nero (black) and the Pagonazzo (dark red), and both belonged to the school of the learned men. The second, a son of Zanobi da Diacceto, and born in 1466, had been one of the chief followers of Ficino, had written many

¹ Nardi, "*Storia*," vol. ii. pp. 85, 86; Nerli, "*Commentarii*," p. 138; Passerini, "*Genealogia della famiglia Rucellai*." Florence, Cellini, 1861.

² *Vide* document vi. of Appendix (III.) of Italian edition. Letter from Luigi Alamanni, younger brother of the Lodovico mentioned above, to his father, dated from Rome, 7th of January, 1518. It shows that at this time the Alamanni were still on the best terms with the Medici.

philosophical works, and lectured at the Studio.¹ Another Diaceto, of a different family, but a pupil of Pagonazzo and known as Il Diacettino, was also one of the most constant visitors to the Orti; he knew Greek and had obtained from the cardinal a lectureship at the Studio.² Like Alamanni and Buondelmonti, he was ambitious, enterprising, and very passionate. All these three were friends of a certain Giovan Battista della Palla, who, having borne a great affection to Giuliano dei Medici, hoped on that account to win a cardinal's hat, and therefore soon went away to intrigue in Rome. But, as we shall have occasion to see, he kept up continual communication by letter with the Florentine friends who were afterwards his fellow conspirators.

Among the many others frequently to be found in the Orti Oricellarii, were the two well-known historians, Jacopo Nardi and Filippo dei Nerli, the former a Medicean, the latter a republican, but still on good terms with the cardinal. All the Rucellai were often present, as well as all celebrated Italian men of letters who happened to be in Florence. Of these we will only mention Giangiorgio Trissino, that famous gentleman of Vicenza, scholar, grammarian, tragic and epic poet, author of "*La Sofonisba*" and the "*Italia liberata dei Goti*," whose name was at that time on all men's lips.³

It has been a mistake to regard these meetings as a renewal, or even a continuance, of the Platonic Academy. The latter expired with Ficino, and its attempted resuscitation took place at a much later date and under different auspices. Those who now frequented the *Orti Oricellarii* belonged, with the exception of Francesco da Diaceto and a few others, not only to a posterior generation, but to one of a totally different nature. Although all were admirers of antiquity, all more or less versed in ancient languages, they were not of the same stuff as the men who in the days of

¹ He died in 1522, and a memoir of him from the pen of Benedetto Varchi was published with F. da Diaceto's work, "*I tre libri d'amore*," at Venice (Giolito), in 1561.

² Among the masses of papers left by Varchi, comprising the rough sketches and notes made by him in preparation for his Histories, there is a note to the effect that this Diaceto "was not related to Francesco, his family having sprung from a different root. But he was always his great friend and pupil, and indeed attended his lectures while studying Greek." Florence National Library, 9, f. 11. The lectureship at the Studio is mentioned by Nardi and others. Nerli and Nardi give many particulars of those frequenting the Orti at this period.

³ *Vide* the work by B. Morsolin, entitled, "*G. G. Trissino, o monografia di un letterato del secolo XVI. Vicenza*," 1878.

Lorenzo the Magnificent spent weeks and months in discussing the ideas of Plato, the style of Aristotle, the allegories of Plotinus and Porphyrius, and points of grammar and rhetoric. A few of the present men were mere politicians, practised in public affairs; the rest were poets, writers of history and Italian prose, true *litterati* of the *Cinquecento*, contemporaries of Raphael, Michel Angelo, Guicciardini, and Ariosto, although being intellectually inferior to those mighty ones, and therefore less independent, they were more servile in their attachment to antiquity. Nor should it be supposed that these reunions were animated at that time by any hostility to Pope or Cardinal, notwithstanding the frequent assertions made to that effect, on account of the conspiracy afterwards formed by a few of the regular visitors to the Orti. On the contrary, the majority were friends of the Medici; and even those who afterwards conspired against them, had long been on excellent terms with them and first alienated by motives of a strictly personal nature. Then, and then only, political passion came into play. An additional proof of this may be seen in the often related incident of how Leo X. was invited to the Orti during his stay in Florence in 1515, and how Rucellai's "*Rosmunda*" was performed before him in honour of his visit.

These meetings were at their most flourishing point when Machiavelli first joined them, and his attendance was certainly no sign of alienation from the Medici cause, but rather indeed of the reverse. And in fact we find that not long after this he was introduced to the Medici household. On the 17th of March, 1519, Filippo Strozzi wrote from Rome to his brother Lorenzo: "I am well content that you have taken Machiavello to the Medici house, for if he can gain a little favour with the masters he is a person who will rise in the world."¹ On the one hand, this letter serves to confirm what we have said concerning the

¹ Florence Archives, "Carte Strozzi-Uguccioni," file 108, at c. 404. Machiavelli's friend, Filippo Strozzi, had been the pupil of Marcello Adriani, and was related to the Medici by his marriage with Clarice, daughter of Piero dei Medici and Alfonsina Orsini. This fact may perhaps explain how it was that, so far back as 1512, when Machiavelli had no personal acquaintance with the Medici, he should yet have addressed some of his writings to them. (*Vide* vol. ii. p. 183 and fol. of *Italian edition of this work*.) And the letter "*to a lady*," supposed by many to be addressed to Alfonsina (vol. ii. p. 183, note 1), was far more probably written to Clarice dei Medici, Filippo's wife. Filippo's letter quoted above is dated from Rome, 17th of March, 1519. But it is uncertain whether the year is indicated after the Roman or the Florentine style.

company in the Oricellarii Gardens ; on the other, it explains how Cardinal dei Medici was just beginning to show some friendliness to Machiavelli. And if it was only at this juncture that the author of the "Prince" gained a footing in the Medici halls, that also proves how very exaggerated, or rather entirely supposititious, were the intimate relations, alleged by many writers to have existed, between him and Lorenzo and Giuliano.

Naturally Machiavelli was now very well received in the Oricellarii Gardens ; Cosimino in particular admired him greatly, drawn to him by a sincere feeling of affection that was heartily reciprocated. It was to him and Zanobi Buondelmonti that Machiavelli dedicated the "Discourses," to him that he alluded with earnest grief in "The Art of War," soon after Cosimino's premature death.

In the midst of these new friends the ex-secretary began to give readings from his "Discourses." They were received with much favour and led to many animated discussions, which always ended by his hearers urging him to devote himself with untiring energy to the work he had undertaken, the which, as Nardi said, was "of a new argument, never (that I know) essayed by any other." And he goes on to say that the new guest was so much beloved by those young men, that they even found a delicate mode of assisting him, for they took unspeakable delight in his conversation, and so greatly admired his writings, that he was not held entirely free from blame when their minds were found to be inflamed to the pitch of bold and dangerous enterprises in favour of liberty.¹

This enthusiastic reception is easily accounted for. Machiavelli was a genuine admirer of the ancients ; but in studying their works his own independence of intellect had remained intact, so that his words impressed these hearers—mostly servile imitators of antique models—as the revelation of an inner conscience. In the midst of this Medicean band, he, who could neither speak nor write in opposition to his real sentiments, openly declared his love of liberty, his enthusiasm for the Roman Republic. Nor did this provoke any scandal. At that time every learned Italian felt admiration for ancient Rome ; every true Florentine was a republican at heart, and the Medici themselves feigned to govern Florence as a republic and promised to revert more and more to republican forms. Machiavelli, therefore, spoke frankly, and freely expounded his ideas before these youths ; gave vent to his

¹ Nardi, "Storia," vol. ii. p. 86.

enthusiasm and continually recurred to his favourite scheme of a Militia Ordinance for the arming of the people. By examples from ancient history, he taught how Italy might be armed in such fashion as to be able to repel foreign invasion and preserve the national dignity and independence.

These were the same arguments afterwards embodied in his "Art of War," and read to his young friends in course of composition. In fact, this new work, that we shall soon have to pass in review, is arranged in the form of dialogues held in the Oricellarii Gardens between the principal frequenters of those meetings. The enthusiasm Machiavelli awakened by these speeches and readings continued to increase ; but, being absorbed in his subject and carried away by the current of his ideas, he was not aware that his words sometimes acted on the minds of his youthful hearers as sparks upon gunpowder, and might well have an equally perilous effect. Accordingly, he used to return quietly to his country solitude, and note down the questions discussed for future readings and arguments.

All this did him no injury with the Medici ; on the contrary, it caused him to be considered in Strozzi's phrase, "*una persona per sorgere*" (a rising man). In fact he was already much spoken of in the Cardinal's circle. This prelate who, when in Rome, had formerly interrogated him through Vettori as to the general state of Italian politics, now urged him to write on the best way of reforming the government of Florence, and to address his discourse to Leo X., the *de facto* lord of the city. It was then the custom of the Medici, and especially of Cardinal Giulio, to interrogate persons of influence in this fashion ; just as it was a favourite custom of the Florentines to note down their opinions on daily events and on reforms to be effected in the government, in order to meet the wishes of the ever restless city. Accordingly we are possessed of no inconsiderable number of discourses of this kind, written at this period, and of varied degrees of eloquence, boldness, and sagacity.

At an earlier part of this work,¹ we have seen how Guicciardini, when in Spain in 1512, already foretelling the overthrow of Soderini, but still ignorant of the restoration of the Medici, had composed a discourse, in which with very great acumen he suggested various plans for increasing the strength and safety of the republic. Soon after, on learning the altered conditions of the

¹ Page 80 and fol.

city, he wrote another, in which, without too plainly showing his readiness to change sides, he expounded the methods whereby the Medici might best consolidate their rule.¹ He treated the same subject with more frankness and at greater length in a third Discourse, composed in 1516, three years after he had returned to Florence and become one of the warmest adherents of the Medici. "The Medici," he then wrote, "possessed themselves of the city against the will and desire of the majority of its inhabitants." The election of Leo X. had, it was true, effected a change in favour of the new rulers; nevertheless, it was still expedient for them to make sagacious provision for the future, in order to avoid the risk of being suddenly exposed to very grave dangers. The chief obstacle to such provision lay in the indifference of Giuliano and Lorenzo, who being absorbed in loftier ambitions paid little attention to Florence, designing rather to erect themselves a State elsewhere. And this was a perilous dream, since it could not be carried out without encountering insurmountable difficulties.

For although Florence was apparently a republic, the Medici had a far stronger and more assured dominion there than any they could hope to establish at Parma, Modena, or elsewhere. It was well for them to remember that the nephews of Calixtus III. and Pius II., by being content with little had been able to preserve their power even after the death of those popes, whereas the Duke of Valentinois had met his fall by aspiring to a new and extensive State. "And the reason of this is clear to us, for if it be a hard matter for private individuals to acquire great States, so it is harder still to maintain them, because of the infinite difficulties in which a new principality is involved."² It is plain by this that Guicciardini was not only entirely opposed to Machiavelli's illusions with regard to Cæsar Borgia, but even to the fundamental idea of the "Prince" and to the counsels already

¹ The first of these Discourses stands third in the "*Opere Inedite*" (vol. ii. p. 262 and fol.) bears the date of 27th of August, with the addition in Guicciardini's hand: "In Spain, anno 1512, and I was near to the end (of my discourse) when I had news that the Medici had entered Florence." The second comes after and therefore stands fourth in the "*Opere Inedite*" (vol. ii. p. 316 and fol.). They are preceded by two others, relating to events of 1495, and that may be regarded as literary exercises, of which Guicciardini wrote a good number, and often for the purpose of using them in his Histories as he has sometimes actually done.

² Guicciardini, "*Opere Inedite*," vol. ii. p. 329.

offered by him to the Medici through Vettori, on the formation of a new State at Parma and Modena.

In Guicciardini's opinion, the Medici would have done far better and acted more wisely in renouncing these hazardous dreams, and solely studying how to preserve their power in Florence. To that end it was requisite to form a nucleus of sure and faithful friends, well acquainted with the humours of the city and therefore fitted to afford help and advice. "Without trusting in them too blindly, and always keeping your hand on the curb, it is yet necessary to grant them power and favours. By favours we are safe to gain the goodwill of all men; since these are no longer the times of the Greeks and Romans when men were satisfied with empty glory. At the present day there is no one in Florence so attached to liberty as not to be ready to accept any other kind of government, provided he can obtain a greater share in it and an easier life than under the republic; while, as regards the bulk of the citizens, it is sufficient to be thrifty, so as not to overburden them with taxes, to take heed that the common law be justly administered, to protect the weak against the strong, to show courtesy to all. Then, as to those who advise hasty assumption of absolute rule over the city, without any shadow of moderation or freedom, it must be remembered that such would be the worst plan of all to adopt in Florence, the most full of suspicion and difficulty, and also in the long run a very cruel and therefore dangerous method for all parties.¹

Such were the counsels offered to the Medici by Guicciardini; very different were those given by Machiavelli now that his turn had come to be interrogated.² In point of fact, he advised neither more nor less than the re-establishment of the republic, while yet endeavouring to arrange some way in which the Pope and Cardinal might retain their actual power for life, since he well knew that, in default of such arrangement, all his proposals would go for nothing. On this account many have charged him with inconsistency, urging against him that, after having suggested in the "Prince" an absolute form of government to Giuliano and Lorenzo dei Medici,

¹ "Opere Inedite," vol. ii., "Discourse" v. p. 325 and fol.

² "Discourse touching the reform of the government of Florence, written at the instance of Pope Leo X." "Opere," vol. iv. p. 105 and fol. Although in the printed editions it is stated that this Discourse was made *ad istanza di Papa Leone X.*, yet from internal evidence it is clear that Machiavelli was directly interrogated by the Cardinal, but not by the Pope.

he now counselled Pope Leo X. to adopt that of a republic. But all trace of inconsistency disappears when it is remembered that the "Prince" was written to demonstrate the possibility of erecting a new State by force; and how, once erected in Italy, it might be aggrandized so as to include the whole of the Peninsula. But now Giuliano and Lorenzo, the men to whom these counsels had been addressed, were both dead, and Machiavelli was interrogated by the Cardinal with reference to a new and very different scheme. It was no longer a question of building up a new state at Parma, Modena, or elsewhere; it was simply a question of governing Florence. Machiavelli had frequently asserted in the "Discourses," in his private letters and in nearly all his political works, that although in northern and southern Italy no government but that of a monarchy was now possible, and that a monarchy alone could, in those parts, establish a new State or unite the whole country, yet that as regarded Tuscany alone, and more especially Florence, no government but that of a republic could enduringly succeed on account of the old customs and great equality of the citizens.

Florence alone was in question at this moment, and even the Pope and the Cardinal appeared convinced that all the Florentines more or less desired a republic. And as neither of these churchmen had any legitimate heir, and both knew for certain that, at their own death, the direct line of Cosimo the Elder and Lorenzo the Magnificent would be extinct, so they only feigned to shrink from decisive steps towards a republic, in order not to renounce their absolute protectorate during their lifetime. Whether these sentiments were true or assumed, they declared them openly and made them believed by many. Machiavelli was convinced of having discovered the solution of the hard problem of the safe establishment of liberty, together with the absolute protectorate for life of Pope and Cardinal. And with this object in view he wrote his new "Discourse."

He starts, therefore, by investigating the causes of the instability of all the successive governments of Florence, and attributes them to the fact that all these governments having been organized in favour of a party rather than for the general welfare, were always a hybrid and precarious jumble of monarchical and republican institutions. "These mixed governments," he says, "ever prove very feeble, being open to injury at so many points. A kingdom is ruined by inclining towards a republic, a republic by inclining

towards a kingdom. But mixed governments fall to ruin on all sides, whether tending towards a republic or a principality. There are many that extol the government of Cosimo and Lorenzo, and would fain establish another in its likeness at the present day. But that government was not exempt from the defects and dangers we have noted in the others, and such defects would be vastly augmented at the present day. For in those times the Medici were reared and educated in the city, were thoroughly acquainted with it, and ruled it with a familiarity that is no longer possible to them now they have become mighty potentates. The majority of the citizens were favourable to them then, but now are against them. Nor were there formerly so many armed sovereigns in Italy as at present, against whom no weak government could oppose any resistance. Many men assert that Florence cannot remain without a head ; but they do not reflect that there may be an official head and a private head. No one can doubt that if a private head had to be chosen, all would prefer one of the Medici house. But if choice had to be made between a public and private leader, the Florentines would always give the preference to a public one, that is : to a magistrate elected by the citizens. At all events it is certain that, in Florence, where the love of equality is so great, it would be impossible to establish a principality without making violent changes. And inasmuch as this would be not only a difficult but also an inhuman and cruel proceeding, it must be deemed unworthy by all desiring a reputation for mercy and goodness. I will therefore put aside all mention of a principality and will treat of a republic, the more that your Holiness is understood to be well disposed to the latter and only hesitating because you desire a government ensuring the maintenance of your great authority in Florence and the safety of your friends. As it seems to me that I have conceived a fitting plan, I have sought to explain my idea to you, so that you may use it, if of any value, and likewise recognize thereby the quality of my devotion to yourself."¹

In its general outline Machiavelli's idea was very simple ; *i.e.*, that of founding a genuine republic, while leaving the choice of magistrates in the hands of the Medici for the present. Thus the

¹ "Opere," vol. iv. pp. 112, 113. Even from these words it is plain that Machiavelli had received no direct and special invitation from the Pope to write upon this matter, otherwise he would certainly have said at this point that it was his duty to reply. There are other expressions, further on, indicating, as it seems to us, that the invitation had proceeded from the Cardinal.

latter would retain their predominance for life ; but at their decease Florence would really regain her liberty. Nor was this a novel idea, for it was precisely the means, the device, by which Cosimo and Lorenzo the Magnificent had become sole masters of the Republic. It is true that in this way they had destroyed liberty ; but now the Pope was at a distance, and neither he nor the Cardinal had any successor to think of ; they could not, or at least, according to Machiavelli, had no right to object, if liberty were to be veritably restored at their death. So, in short, it was only a question of trying to persuade the Medici that they might earn immortal glory if, while preserving their power in Florence for life, they would at once ensure the triumph of the Republic in the future. For the practical solution of this difficult problem, Machiavelli resorts in his "Discourses" to many contrivances rendering his proposals extremely complicated. At one moment he reverts to the old Florentine theory of the three ambitions, of the three classes of citizens to be made satisfied : those, namely, seeking to hold the first rank and command ; those contented with some sort of share in the government ; and the masses asking nothing but freedom and justice. He wished to suppress the whole complicated machinery of the old councils and magistracies, which, with veiled perfidy, the Medici had resuscitated from the statutes anterior to 1494 ; and he proposed instituting a Gonfaloniership with a Signory, Senate, and General Council. This was the form of government founded in 1494, in the time of Savonarola, and that, with slight alterations, had endured to 1512. It was, indeed, substantially the same as that suggested first by Guicciardini and then by Giannotti, although each had introduced different modifications.

Coming next to the practical mode of achieving his suggested reforms, Machiavelli began by proposing the election for life of sixty-five citizens past the age of forty-five, one of whom was to be elected Gonfalonier for two or three years, or even for life. One-half of the remaining sixty-four were to form a species of council for the Gonfalonier, holding office during one year, replaced at the end of the term by the other half, and so on in alternation. These thirty-two were to be subdivided into groups of eight citizens each, constituting the Signory proper for three months, under the presidency of the Gonfalonier. In this way the most restless ambition might be satisfied. Then came the Senate or Council of the Two Hundred, of which the members

must be forty years old. Machiavelli likewise abolished many useless magistrates; but retained the Eight of "Guardia and Balia," forming a species of common court of justice, and the Eight of "Pratica," who were intrusted with war affairs and hence with the Militia Ordinance. This latter was ever the institution he had most at heart. The Medici had suppressed it in 1512, and then recalled it to temporary existence by a decree of the 19th of May, 1514, under the name of Ordinance of the Territory¹ ("Ordinanza del Contado").

Machiavelli would not dwell upon the subject at a moment when it was very inopportune to speak of arming the people, but determined to recur to it later, after having succeeded in obtaining the re-establishment of the Republic. For the present, therefore, he left the "Otto di Pratica" and the militia untouched, only suggesting that the latter should be divided into two bodies, to each of which should be attached a commissary nominated every two years by the Pope. And Pope and Cardinal were also, with the authority and consent of the whole Florentine people, to elect the Gonfa-

¹ This decree is to be found in the Florence Archives, "Balie" (1512-26), No. 58; and according to the old classification: class xi. dist. 18, No. 19, at c. 157¹. He begins with the statement that the Gonfalonier and Signory of Florence deem it well to "make provision that the State may be long preserved and rendered entirely secure against any injury and especially against any sudden attack. That they believe this may be easily assured, whenever their own people are well armed and organized, and no attempt made to rely upon foreign arms and mercenaries." Therefore the militia is re-established; and it is decreed that ten thousand foot soldiers are to be enlisted under the flags of the territory and district (contado e distretto), and that their superintendence is to be entrusted to "the magistrate of the respectable Ten of 'Balìa,' and in case of that magistrate not being forthcoming, to the magistrate of the respectable Eight of 'Pratica.'" This provision was made because at that time it was already determined to suppress the Ten and replace them by the Eight of "Pratica," who, in fact, entered office on the 10th of June of the same year. The letters of the Ten come to an end on the 9th of June, 1514, and the first two vols. of the letters of the "Otto di Pratica" (Nos. 28 and 29 according to the new classification, and according to the old: class x. dist. 5, Nos. 49 and 50) all bear the following title: "Alter ex libris litterarum intra Dominium scriptarum per magnos Octoviros Praticæ Reip. Flo^{ne}, inceptus die X^{ma} junii mdxiiij, qua die inceptum officium dicti Octoviratus, et est primus magistratus, &c." Lorenzo dei Medici, the Pope's nephew, was a member of the first Eight. The two vols. quoted run from 1514 to 1516 and complete each other. The first letter is of the 13th of June, 1514. The decree quoted above was only partially and unwillingly carried out. In fact, the Medici always neglected the Militia Ordinance.

We must here mention that even Guicciardini spoke favourably of the Militia Ordinance in the "Discourses" from which we have previously quoted, and wished to see it enlarged and strengthened. "Opere Inedite," vol. xi., "Discourse" iii. p. 264.

lonier, the Signory, the Two Hundred, and all other magistrates. This was to be the means of investing them with supreme power during their life, in order that all power might pass to the people after their death.

But the last and most important part of the reform still remained to be considered, namely, that of satisfying the bulk of the citizens. "To this end," pursued Machiavelli, with rising animation, "it is necessary to re-open the hall of the Great Council." "Without satisfying the masses no stable republic has ever been established; and the mass of Florentine citizens will never be content until the hall is re-opened; therefore, in order to ground a republic in Florence, it is requisite to re-open this hall, and restore this privilege to the masses. And your Holiness may be assured that this would be the first thing done by any enemy wishing to deprive you of the State, and therefore it would be a wiser plan for the hall to be opened on safe terms by your own hand."¹

Hence it was necessary that the Grand Council should be reconstituted on the usual plan, and composed of a thousand, or at the least, of six hundred, citizens. There was no need to fix the mode of election, since all *beneficiati* could sit in turn, that is to say, all citizens eligible for official posts and consequently for seats in Council. The highest function of this body, besides that of sanctioning the laws, was the election of the magistrates; but these prerogatives were at present only granted to it in a very limited degree, since they were to be retained by the Medici until both Pope and Cardinal ceased to breathe, and only then be restored to the people. It was also suggested by Machiavelli that the Medici should occasionally summon the Council to a wider, or rather to the full exercise of its rights in order that the people might be gradually trained to liberty; and in this, indeed, lay the main gist of his "Discourse."

"By these measures," so he said in conclusion, addressing Pope and Cardinal with ever-increasing fervour, "you become absolute lords of all. You nominate the chief magistrates, the Gonfalonier, the Signory, the Two Hundred; you legislate with the authority of the whole people; everything depends upon your will; nor, during your life, does this government in any way differ from a monarchy. At your death you bequeath to your country a genuine, free Republic, that will owe its existence to you." "I

¹ "Opere," vol. iv. p. 117.

hold that the greatest honour to be attained by men, is that which is voluntarily conferred upon them by their country; I hold that the greatest good that can be accomplished and the most grateful to God, is that which is done to our country. Besides, no men win so much praise for their deeds as those who have reformed republics and kingdoms by means of laws and institutions: these are the men who, next to the gods, have most been extolled. . . . Therefore, Heaven can grant no greater gift to mortal man, nor point out to him a more glorious path than this; and amid the many benefits God has conferred upon your house and upon the person of your Holiness, the greatest is this of giving you the strength and purpose to earn immortality, and thus greatly surpass your ancestral power and glory."¹

Although this conclusion leads us back to Machiavelli's dominant idea, and recalls the final exhortation of the "Prince," no great scientific, nor indeed great practical value can be attributed to his "Discourse" as a whole. For, it either repeats ideas already expounded by him in minuter detail elsewhere, or echoes, without comment, doctrines universally known and accepted in Florence. The form of republic proposed by him is identical in its main outline with that counselled by all at that period. As to the modifications he suggested for its improvement, his counsels are very inferior to the far more sagacious and practical advice written by Guicciardini from Spain in the first "Discourse" that we examined.²

The subtle contrivances by which Machiavelli sought to prepare the transition from present despotism to future liberty, were decidedly too subtle and crafty, as was later observed by Alessandro dei Pazzi when questioned in his turn by Cardinal dei Medici.³ Even had all these contrivances been adopted, they could have scarcely achieved the desired end. A republic placed entirely in the power of a Pope such as Leo X. would either have led to immediate conflict, or increased the difficulty of really establishing freedom. Nevertheless, Machiavelli's "Discourse" is another proof of the sincerity, constancy, and depth of his attach-

¹ "Opere," vol. iv. pp. 121, 122.

² "Discourse" iii. in the "Opere Inedite," vol. ii. p. 262 and fol.

³ Pazzi's "Discourse" was written in 1522, and is published in the "Archivio Storico," vol. i. p. 420 and fol. The author considers the form of government proposed by Machiavelli to be "of a kind unusual to that city, and extravagant" (p. 429).

ment to liberty. After so earnestly craving the favour of the Medici, in order to obtain some public employment at their hands, no sooner do they notice him and ask his opinion than he is unable to do more than reiterate with irrepressible enthusiasm the simple exhortation that the supreme glory and fortune to be desired of mortals in this world consists in the might and determination to found a free, civilized, and powerful State. So firmly was he persuaded of this, as not to understand how others could fail to be likewise instantaneously convinced. This made him hopeful of inducing first Giuliano and then Lorenzo to become the saviour of Italy; this now made him hope to persuade Leo X. to lay the foundations of the future freedom of Florence. He was deceived in both cases, but nevertheless neither resigned his faith nor renounced his intention of renewing the attempt. At this moment the Pope attached no importance to proposals mainly offered to him at the instigation of the Cardinal.¹ Thus both Pontiff and prelate made use of dissertations of this kind, and, directly and indirectly, frequently invited them, for the sole purpose of quieting the hottest lovers of liberty by throwing a sop to their hopes and illusions.

The Cardinal was now desirous to attract Machiavelli. He was already personally acquainted with him; and had begun to correspond with him and to accord him certain favours. Better times, therefore, seemed about to dawn upon the ex-secretary; but the signs were still so slight and the favours so small, as occasionally to procure him more humiliation than pleasure. In the year 1520 he was employed for the first time by the Signory and the Cardinal as Commissioner to Lucca, to arrange the affairs of certain Florentine traders holding a credit of sixteen hundred florins on one Michele Guinigi of that city, who refused payment. This was a private affair that might have been settled by the common tribunals, but complications had grown out of it requiring the

¹ At the close of this "Discourse" Machiavelli seems to positively refer the Pope to information the Cardinal was to give him *vivâ voce*. He tells his Holiness that unless timely precautions be taken, the condition of Florence may at any moment expose the Medici to a thousand unexpected dangers, and in the meantime already causes them numerous vexations insupportable to any one; "and for these vexations his most reverend Eminence the Cardinal can vouch, as he has spent the past months in Florence" ("Opere," vol. iv. p. 122). This seems to additionally confirm the fact of the invitation having proceeded from the Cardinal. Besides, contemporary historians agree that it was he who interrogated the citizens and gave them to believe that the Pope had authorized him to do so.

intervention of the two governments. Guinigi had inherited a large fortune from his father ; but, as it was known that he would speedily dissipate this patrimony, the greater part had been entailed to his children. In fact, besides the debts he had contracted with Florentines and others in the course of his business, he had already lost large sums at the gambling-table, and was therefore unable to satisfy his creditors. Accordingly, permission was now asked of the Lucchese Republic to place the affair in the hands of special arbitrators, authorized either to cancel or at least put aside the gambling debts, so as to give absolute precedence to the commercial obligations. Only in this case would the kinsmen and guardians of Guinigi's children promise to be liable for the trade debts, and they would in no case consent to pay the sums lost at play. But these gambling debts having been attested in proper legal form, they could not be set aside without the intervention of the political arm. Unless this could be obtained the whole of Michele Guinigi's patrimony would be held in trust for his children who were minors, and their guardians legally authorized to refuse payment to the Florentine creditors. After prolonged negotiation, Machiavelli succeeded in persuading the General Council of Lucca to place the matter in the hands of the Praetor and three arbitrators who were to examine the accounts. It could thus be ascertained which were *bonâ fide* contracts for justifiable debts, which fictitious, and on all doubtful points they could apply to the Elders of the Republic, who in their turn would again bring the matter before the General Council.¹

Being detained in Lucca several months by this business, Machiavelli as usual spent his time in studying his surroundings and taking notes of all that he saw. In fact, there has come down to us a "Summary of the affairs of the city of Lucca,"² that must

¹ Several documents relating to this affair are included among the "Carte del Machiavelli," case i. No. 60, and were published in the "Opere" (P. M.), vol. vi. pp. 267-276. These are : a petition from the Florentine merchants to the Signory of Lucca, undated ; a second petition from the same, dated . . . September, 1520 ; a memorandum for Niccolò Machiavelli, by an unknown hand, giving him detailed information of the whole affair ; a *note of things to be clearly remembered as to the transactions of Michele Guinigi* ; finally, the sentence of the General Council of Lucca. All these documents, excepting the third, are in Machiavelli's handwriting. In document vii. of Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, we sub-join a couple of letters from G. B. Bracci to Machiavelli, dated 14th of August and 7th of September, 1520, upon the same question, which complete the series of documents connected with this affair.

² "Opere," vol. iv. pp. 124-133.

have been written by him at this period. It is a hasty and somewhat incorrect sketch ; but contains many apposite reflections. The Signory, he tells us, was composed of nine citizens and the Gonfalonier, who were changed every two months and not eligible for re-election within two years. Then there was a council of thirty-six, renewed every six months ; the citizens composing it during the first half year could not be re-elected for the second, but were eligible for the succeeding term. The General Council sat for a year, and consisted of seventy-two members,¹ elected by the Signory, and twelve other citizens nominated by the thirty-six and forbidden to sit two years in succession. The Signory exercised very great authority over the territory, which, according to the republican custom of those times, enjoyed no political liberty ; but had very little power within the city, where it was only competent to convoke councils, and bring forward decrees prepared in the *Pratiche*, or, as they were called at Lucca, *Colloqui* (conversations), in which the wisest citizens were invited to take part. The General Council constituted the real government of the city, for it had power to make laws and treaties, to pronounce sentence of death without appeal ; and its motions were carried by a majority of three-fourths of the votes. Nevertheless there was a Potestà exercising authority in civil and criminal suits.²

Machiavelli observes that this Lucca government worked well, notwithstanding some defects. He approves of the Signory having but little authority over the citizens, "for such has always been the practice of good republics, inasmuch as the chief magistrate can easily abuse his power, if he be not held in check. Neither had the Roman Consuls, nor have the Doge and Signory of Venice any power over citizens' lives." Still, the Signory of Lucca lacked fitting dignity, according to Machiavelli ; "because the brief term of office and the numerous exclusions compelled the nomination of persons of small account. Thus it was continually necessary to recur in the *Colloqui* to the advice of private citizens, the which is not customary in well-organized republics, wherein the greatest number distributes office, the medium number gives advice, the minority executes." Such indeed was then considered

¹ This was his first mistake, for there were 90 and not 72 members, who with the substitutes, also mentioned by Machiavelli, formed a Council of 120. So at least it is stated by the Statute of 1446, still in vigour at that time.

² The printed edition gives the words *potestà fiorentino*, but this must certainly be a misprint for *potestà forestiero*. For Florentines and their subjects were always excluded in Lucca from every office that had to be held by foreigners.

the fundamental rule and necessary basis of every regular government, there being no exact idea at that time of the modern division of power. Accordingly, Machiavelli went on to say : "Thus did the people, Senate, and Consuls of Rome ; thus do now in Venice the Grand Council, the Pregadi, the Signory. But at Lucca, on the contrary, these orders are confused, for the medium number, that is the Council of Thirty-six, distributes office ; the Seventy-two and the Signory are partly advisers, partly executants of the law. Yet in practice even this leads to little mischief, for the same reason mentioned above, namely, that the magistrates are slightly considered on account of their lack of dignity, and rich men chiefly concern themselves with their own private affairs. Nevertheless, this order of things is not to be recommended." He then proceeds to approve of the General Council's power of life and death over the citizens, because, in his opinion, such power is a great check on the ambition of persons of importance, who would never be condemned by a small tribunal. Still, he would prefer that, as in Florence, there should be a bench of four or six magistrates, to decide the smaller civil and criminal disputes of the citizens, leaving to the Potestà the charge of political trials and of all others devolved upon him by the Statutes.

"Unless some such magistrature be established," he said, "the smaller suits of daily occurrence will be always neglected, much to the harm and peril of liberty. In fact, even at Lucca it has been found necessary to pass a special law, known as the Scapegrace law, by which in September and March the Councils jointly decree the expulsion from the State for three years of a certain number of the more dangerous young men. This generally served as a check, but nevertheless proved useless against the insolence of the Poggio family, which was more alarming than any other." This short summary, as may easily be seen, is of no great value ; but it proves Machiavelli's constant habit of seizing every opportunity of studying the institutions and political machinery of other States, whether near or distant, and of trying to discover and suggest means for their improvement.

But these studies did not fill up much of his time, and he was therefore obliged to seek additional employment. He received various letters at this period, and among them one from Cardinal dei Medici, dated the last day of July, and beginning with the words : *Spectabilis vir, amice mi' carissime*. In this he was desired to obtain the expulsion from Lucca of three students of

the Pisan University, who had been already expelled thence for bad conduct.¹ His friends of the Oricellarii Gardens sometimes sent him serious, sometimes facetious letters praying for his speedy return, and his children urged this still more warmly both in their own name and that of their mother, Marietta.² But Machiavelli was unable to leave until the affair in his charge had been brought to some conclusion, and accordingly profited by his leisure at Lucca to compose his short and well-known work, entitled, the "Life of Castruccio Castracani." On the 29th of August he sent this book to his friend Zanobi Buondelmonti, having dedicated it to him and to Luigi Alamanni *suoi amicissimi*. And as early as the 6th of September Buondelmonti replied that he had received and read it with Alamanni and other friends, who were all very much pleased with it.³

It is a well-known fact that, even as his other works, this one aroused much doubt and dispute. By some it was styled a romance, by others an imitation of Xenophon's "Cyropædia," and so on. It certainly is not history, as may be ascertained by all who care to compare it with any narrative of the best-known authentic facts. The author composed the biography of an imaginary personage, to whom he gave the name of Castruccio Castracani, and filled it, partly with incidents from the latter's life, as related in history, and partly with those derived from the life of Agathocles in books xix. and xx. of Diodorus Siculus, with the addition of sundry particulars of his own invention. The real Castruccio was a legitimate scion of the noble family of the Antelminelli; he was born in 1281, and at an early age shared the banishment of his father Geri, at Ancona. On the death of his parents, he went to the wars in Flanders, together with Alberto Scotti and Musciatto

¹ This letter is given twice in different shapes in the "Opere" (P. M.). At p. 88 of vol. i. it is printed pretty correctly, excepting as to the date; *Ex Florentia ultima junii* MDXXX., which is incorrect. In vol. vi., at p. 210, the date is correctly given: *Ex Palatio florentino* (although the original has it: *Ex Florentia ultima julii* MDXX.), but the letter contains several mistakes. And it is also an error to say that it is to be found in the "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. No. 51, for it is in No. 41, as noted in vol. i.

² *Vide* Italian edition, documents viii. and ix. of Appendix (III.), where we give a letter dated 30th of July, from Bernardo Machiavelli to his father at Lucca, and another to the same from Filippo dei Nerli, dated 1st of August, 1520. Several others of the same period were published in the "Opere" (P. M.).

³ Buondelmonti's letter is among the "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. No. 43, and was published in the "Opere" (P. M.), vol. i. p. lxxxvii.

Franzese in the service of Philip the Beautiful. In 1310 he was fighting in Lombardy on the side of the Visconti.

Machiavelli's narrative, on the contrary, begins by asserting that extraordinary men are nearly always of low and obscure birth, because destiny likes to show its might in this way; and then goes on to relate how a certain Canon Castracani and his sister Dianora, who lived with him, found a forsaken baby in their garden and brought it up in their own house, and that this child was the famous Castruccio. Showing an aptitude for arms, he was trained by Messer Francesco Guinigi, and taken by him to the Lombard wars, where from the age of eighteen he began to be distinguished for his valour. Now this Canon and his sister are wholly fictitious personages, and equally fictitious is the fable of the foundling discovered in the garden. Besides, the real Castruccio was away from Italy at the age of eighteen; nor is there any Francesco Guinigi that could have played the part narrated by Machiavelli. But, according to Diodorus Siculus, Agathocles was abandoned by his father. His mother found him after some days, and carried him to her brother, by whom he was reared. Later, Agathocles found a protector in a nobleman, who gave him a post in the army, in which he quickly gained distinction by his valour.

Machiavelli goes on to relate how, directly after Castruccio's return to Lucca from Lombardy, Messer Francesco Guinigi died, and, leaving a son of thirteen named Paolo, chose Castruccio as the boy's guardian and governor of his estates. Paolo, like his father, and indeed the whole episode, is an imaginary figure borrowed from Diodorus, who narrates that Agathocles married the widow of his protector, and thus exchanged poverty for wealth. The method by which Castruccio, little by little, first with the aid of Uguccione della Faggiuola, lord of Pisa, and then in opposition to his will, succeeded in becoming tyrant of Lucca, is recounted by Machiavelli with greater truthfulness. But the battle of Montecatini, where the Florentines were defeated, and Castruccio fought so valiantly under the banner of Uguccione that the latter's jealousy was aroused and his friendship turned to enmity, is described in a very arbitrary fashion. Machiavelli makes Uguccione fall ill—although, on the contrary, he was at the head of the army—in order to give the command to Castruccio, and attributes to him, in his usual way, a wholly imaginary plan of battle. And after Castruccio has become lord

of Lucca, and head of the Tuscan Ghibellines through the death of Ugucione, there follows a narrative of the stratagems by which he suppressed a rebellion in that city.

Here again Machiavelli imitates Diodorus, by attributing to his hero the same conduct pursued by Agathocles in extinguishing his enemies, and so often mentioned and recommended by himself in the pages of the "Prince" and the "Discourses." According to Diodorus Siculus, Agathocles, having first, as captain of the Syracusans, collected a great army, then summoned the heads of the Council of Six Hundred, under pretext of asking their advice, and put them all to death. He next roused the people against the nobles they hated, and thus about four thousand persons were massacred. According to Machiavelli, Stefano di Poggio first joined the rebels in Lucca, then quieted them, so that on Castruccio's return from the camp, he presented himself to the latter, showed him that all was tranquil, thanks to his efforts, and spoke in favour of his friends and relations. Castruccio gave him a kindly welcome, and invited him to bring his friends. But when they came before him, confiding in his pledged word, all were seized and put to death, after which he likewise slaughtered many others who seemed likely to aspire to the highest rank, and thus at last was safely established as lord of Lucca.¹

Even the narrative of the means by which Castruccio gained possession of Pistoia, is entirely fictitious. According to Machiavelli, the tyrant came to terms with the leaders of the two factions dividing the city, making both believe that he would march in on a certain night to oppose their adversaries. But when the moment came, at a given signal, he attacked both parties, vanquished them and had them all put to death. The city was then summoned to yield in Castruccio's name, and surrendered to him together with the outlying territory, "so that," says Machiavelli in conclusion, "every one, being full of hope, and chiefly stirred by his *virtue*, subsided into quiet."² There is not a word of truth in this account. Pistoia was surrendered by Filippo Tedici, chief of the city. Finding himself too weak to resist Castruccio, the Florentines, and his enemies within the walls, all at the same time, he tricked the second and gave himself up to the first, who appointed him his captain and gave him his daughter to wife. Such, at least, is the version narrated in the far more credible "Storie Pistolesi." Among other things Machiavelli assigns neither wife

¹ "Opere," vol. ii. p. 413.

² Ibid., vol. ii. p. 414.

nor children to Castruccio, although he was not only married, but the father of a family.

The capture of Pistoia was actually succeeded by two battles, forming the most important events of Castruccio's military career. The first and chief was that of Altopascio (1325), in which the Florentines were completely defeated. Yet Machiavelli, who has given a detailed account of this battle in his "Histories," says no word of it here. After several other military enterprises, Castruccio, now Duke of Lucca, Volterra, Pistoia, &c., and Imperial Vicar at Pisa, found himself in Rome, whither he had gone with Louis the Bavarian. Here he learnt that the Florentines had retaken Pistoia. Hastening to Lucca, he collected an army, besieged Pistoia, and at the same time defeated the Florentines who tried to rescue the city. Yet Machiavelli has nothing to say of this campaign, the second in importance in Castruccio's real life, and narrates sham battles instead. According to him, Castruccio, having led his army from Lucca, encountered the Florentines at Serravalle, and he gives a most minute description of a battle that never took place there, and in which Castruccio is supposed to have proved the splendour of his military genius by routing the enemy. Thus again master of Pistoia, he hurried towards Pisa, where a conspiracy had broken out. On the way he met the Florentines, who fell upon him with a very numerous army at Fucecchio, and we are then treated to a most complete description of another imaginary battle, in which Castruccio's genius is again resplendent, and the Florentines are beaten once more. These two narratives, which, by the way, are contradicted by Machiavelli's own "Histories," serve to show even more clearly than elsewhere that his "Vita di Castruccio" was intended for a miniature politico-military romance, and written to prove, among other things, the great superiority in warfare of infantry *versus* cavalry. This was always Machiavelli's favourite theory, and it was also a correct one. He had long before alluded to it in the "Discourses," and had recently enlarged upon it, and given its theoretical demonstration in the "Art of War," as we shall soon have occasion to see. In the "Life of Castruccio" he tried to bring it within general comprehension by illustrating it with imaginary examples, to which, for the sake of greater effect, he gave an historical colouring.

Meanwhile, Fortune, the everlasting ruler of human events—thus continues Machiavelli—after having thus far favoured

Castruccio, now determined, the better to prove her power, to bring his life to a sudden end by a fever that struck him down after the last of his glorious battles. Feeling the approach of death, he sent for his hypothetical successor and addressed him in the following terms: "Had I foreseen that fate would check my course half way, I would have bequeathed thee a smaller State and fewer enemies. But fate is arbiter in all things, and has neither granted me sufficient judgment to foresee her will, nor sufficient time to overcome it. I abstained from marriage in order to show gratitude to the race of thy father, my protector. It is now thy part to try to maintain the kingdom that I leave thee and that I acquired by force of arms." Paolo had neither the valour nor good fortune of Castruccio, and speedily forfeited his kingdom. So runs Machiavelli's tale; but all this, too, is pure romance, for, as we have already said, Castruccio left several sons, who held the State, although they lost it before long, neither the paternal sagacity nor valour being included in their inheritance.¹ This singular biography, which begins and ends by extolling the omnipotence of fate, winds up with a series of memorable sayings attributed to Castruccio. Many writers believed that nearly all these were derived from the Apothegms of Plutarch; but it has been recently proved that a considerable number of them are borrowed from the "Life of Aristippus" by Diogenes Laertius.²

¹ For Castruccio's life, the following are the authorities to be consulted: "Vita Castrucci Antelminelli lucensis ducis, auctore Nicalao Tegrino una cum etrusca versione Georgii Dati," Lucae, 1742; "Le attioni di Castruccio Castracani degli Antelminelli, Signore di Lucca," &c., Roma, Gigliucci; Pignotti, "Storia della Toscana," libro iii. at conclusion. Signor F. L. Polidori included an "Esame critico della vita di Castruccio Castracani" in his edition of the "Opere Minori" of Machiavelli (Florence, Le Monnier, 1852), *vide* p. 33 and fol. In this study, the author notes the historical blunders contained in Machiavelli's work, and to which other writers had long before begun to call attention. Many had observed that in this work Machiavelli had borrowed from the ancients. But we believe that Signor C. Triantafillis was the first to prove that the narrative was partly derived from the life of Agathocles related by Diodorus Siculus. *Vide* "Sulla vita di Castruccio Castracani scritta da Niccolò Machiavelli, ricerche" by C. Triantafillis. This work was first published in the "Archivio Veneto," tom. x. part i. 1875; and afterwards as a separate pamphlet (Venice, Commercio Press, 1875).

² Sig. Menagio, of the Fabricio Library, had declared that the memorable sayings attributed by Machiavelli to Castruccio were extracted from Plutarch's Apothegms; but Signor Triantafillis has quoted eleven that are clearly copied from the life of Aristippus of Diogenes Laertius, an author who—as it may be well to observe—had been already translated in the fifteenth century by Traversari.

From all that we have said, it seems to us that Machiavelli's object in writing this work is sufficiently plain. Being in Lucca, it was only in accordance with his usual habit that he should study the history of the place, and his attention was naturally drawn to the character and career of Castruccio, the daring soldier and acute politician, who was the founder of a new State, and a personage of the Cæsar Borgia stamp. Just as this latter, in passing through the crucible of Machiavelli's fancy, had been transmuted into his political ideal, so too, Castruccio, still more easily transformed, being viewed from a greater distance, became his politico-military ideal. Making him almost the imaginary hero of a singular historical romance, he sought to personify in him not only some of the ideas expressed in the "Prince" and the "Discourses," but many of the theories recently expounded in his "Art of War." When the real history of Castruccio was insufficient, he reverted to that of Agathocles, and everything lacking in this was supplied by his own imagination, which, in short, served to arrange and combine all details to his own liking. It is very probable, that, as many have asserted, the "Cyropædia" of Xenophon first suggested the composition of this work. In fact, Machiavelli, when alluding to it in his "Discourses,"¹ says, that Xenophon wrote it in order to show what were the qualities possessed by and almost always essential to the success of conquering princes. But at all events, it is certain that the "Cyropædia" could only furnish general suggestions as to the nature and method of the work. As regards its main substance, its purpose and its precepts, the "Life of Castruccio" strictly appertains to Machiavelli and his times.

But it is not surprising that a work composed under similar conditions and for similar ends should have led to much dispute. Doubts and conjectures, in fact, were started from the first moment of its appearance and are still unsettled. In the letter of Zanobi Buondelmonti mentioned above, the writer spoke of the pleasure with which he and many other comrades of the Oricellarii Gardens had perused the new work, and encouraged Machiavelli to persevere in historical writing, "because in this your style is more elevated than in treating of other themes." But while all

¹ "Discorsi," book ii. chap. xiii. p. 222. "Xenophon, in his life of Cyrus, shows the needfulness of deceit, considering that he makes the first expedition of Cyrus against the king of Armenia to be full of fraud, and shows that his hero occupied that kingdom by stratagem, not by force of arms."

were agreed on that point, "every one hesitated and doubted as to the history itself and as to the explanation of your meaning and conceptions." Buondelmonti also remarked, and not without justice, that the sayings assigned to Castruccio seemed too numerous, the more especially as some of them had been already "attributed to other ancient and modern stages." ¹

Undoubtedly Machiavelli's narrative proceeds with a rapid swing, an attractive limpidity and freshness of style, for these gifts never failed him when he was dealing with the personification of his ideals. But only when we have formed a clear conception of those ideals, is it possible for us to understand how the "Life of Castruccio Castracani" took shape in his mind, or to perceive how simple and natural was his object in writing it.

¹ *Vide* letter in the "Opere" (P. M.), vol. i. p. lxxxvii.





CHAPTER VIII.

The "Art of War."



WE have already noted that it was during these years in Florence that Machiavelli wrote the seven books of the "Art of War." They were dedicated to Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi, who had introduced the author to the Medici family, and are in the form of dialogues supposed to be held in the Oricellarii Gardens between Cosimo Rucellai, Fabrizio Colonna, Zanobi Buondelmonti, Battista della Palla, and Luigi Alamanni, during the year 1516, after Colonna's return to Florence at the close of the Lombard war. Nevertheless, it is clear that this work was written some years later, for in the opening pages the author speaks of the death of Cosimo Rucellai, which certainly did not occur before 1519.¹ The book was probably finished in 1520. In fact, on the 17th of November of that year, Filippo dei Nerli, in writing to Machiavelli, tells him that he has not yet received either the "Life of Castruccio," or the work "De re militari," and makes special complaint of not possessing the latter, because Cardinal dei Medici also wished to read it.² The "Art of War," at all events,

¹ Passerini, in his "Genealogia e Storia della famiglia Rucellai" (Florence, Cellini, 1861), states that Cosimo was born in 1495 and died *about* 1520. But in his "Curiosità storico-artistiche," both at pp. 69 and 71, he gives the year 1519 as the date of his death.

² "Opere" (P. M.), vol. i. p. lxxxvi. It is true that the title "De re militari" might also apply to Vegezio's work of that name. But its being mentioned together with the "Vita di Castruccio," makes us believe it to have been Machiavelli's "Arte della Guerra"; nor is it likely that Cardinal dei Medici would have been obliged to apply to Machiavelli in order to obtain the work of Vegetius.

was already published in Florence by the 16th of August, 1521.¹

In the same way that the "Prince" is only an amplification of certain ideas already sketched out in the "Discourses," so the "Art of War" explains in detail all that was briefly mentioned in the same regarding the method of disciplining armies and leading them into action. These three works, in short, being all governed by the same idea, might easily be fused into one. The "Discourses," containing the germs of both the others, and therefore the entire political system of the author, chiefly treat of the means of establishing the liberty of the State; the "Prince" of the mode of founding a new and absolute monarchy, in order to later obtain by its aid the unity and independence of the whole country; while the "Art of War" teaches how the nation should be prepared for the defence of liberty and independence. And in all three works, even when treating the question theoretically and in general terms, Machiavelli always keeps Italy specially in view. Hence all three have, not only a scientific merit, but also a practical and historic value that greatly increases the difficulty of pronouncing judgment on them. Other and stronger obstacles

¹ Gamba erroneously supposes this edition to be identical with that of 1529. Both were in the Palatine and are now in the National Library of Florence. At the end of the first is the inscription: "Impresso in Firenze per li Heredi di Philippo di Giunta, nelli anni del Signore MDXXI. a di xvi d'Agosto, Leone X. Pontefice." Vide "Il Quarto Centenario di Niccolò Machiavelli."

Codex 1451, cl. viii., in the Florence National Library, contains long fragments of the "Arte della Guerra" in Machiavelli's handwriting. There were 183 sheets, but now several are missing, and those remaining are not in order. They go from Nos. 7 to 16, from 97 to 110, from 113 to 154, from 161 to 166, from 169 to 183. The first sheet, No. 7, begins: "Cosimo. Basterebbe quando io fossi certo, che la occasione." Sheet 176 contains the conclusion of the work. The sheets from 177 to 183 contain the tables, preceded by an explanatory notice to the reader. Then follow two double sheets, unnumbered, containing the author's additions and corrections. Included among these fragments is a separate sheet, certainly of Machiavelli's time but not in his hand, containing the Greek alphabet with explanations in Latin. It seems sufficiently clear that as Machiavelli found it necessary to use many different signs when compiling his tables, in order to indicate the disposition of the various portions of his army, and as the Latin letters did not suffice, he must have applied to a friend for the Greek alphabet, with which he himself was imperfectly acquainted. Accordingly, his friend forwarded him the alphabet in his own hand, and added explanations of the vowels, consonants, diphthongs, &c. Such at least would seem to be the only plausible explanation of the existence of this sheet in a strange hand among the autograph remains of the "Art of War," in which the author makes frequent use of the Greek alphabet.

have to be encountered in entering on an accurate critical study of the "Art of War." Even military men can scarcely estimate the historic value of a work that is incomprehensible if regarded apart, from its time, and it is impossible for civilians to fix the measure of intrinsic and technical worth that it undoubtedly possesses. Nor are these difficulties lessened by the fact of Machiavelli never having been a practical tactician. For this neither assists our judgment of the real value of his military theories, nor renders it easier to ascertain what were his blunders, nor which of these were derived from his inexperience, which from his times. In his day firearms had not as yet produced the revolution in army organization that afterwards led to an altered mode of warfare and to the creation of modern tactics. Indeed, the science of tactics was as yet unknown and unimagined. Machiavelli was the first to venture to attempt it, thereby showing an audacity equal to that which incited him to found a science of statecraft.

How far did he succeed in his attempt? This is the question to which we are bound to reply; and it is excessively difficult to do so, especially when quite unversed in military science. We shall therefore consult more competent judges, and profit by the counsels and suggestions of the military men to whose aid we have frequently had to recur in the course of this chapter.¹ However,

¹ Two writers in particular have favoured us with special advice: first, Herr Max Jähns, a well-known writer on military topics, a Major on the Prussian Staff, author of the work entitled: "Geschichte des Kriegswesens von der Urzeit bis zur Renaissance," and who in 1876 published an essay on "Machiavelli und der Gedanke der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht" (*vide* "Kölnische Zeitung," August, 1877, Nos. 108, 110, 112, and 115). By means of our friend, Professor Karl Hillebrand, we addressed a few questions to this gentleman. And the Major had the great kindness to furnish us with the fullest reply by forwarding a manuscript entitled: "Machiavelli als militärischer Techniker," since published in "Die Grenzboten für Politik, Literatur und Kunst," No. xiii. (24th of March, 1881), Leipsic. We take this opportunity of expressing our deepest gratitude to the kind and learned author.

We have also repeatedly applied to Major Valentino Chiala, an Italian Staff officer, and it is impossible to speak too highly of his unfailing kindness in replying to the numerous questions we have addressed to him during the last two years. We will only state that, but for his ready and valuable advice, we might frequently have gone astray in our examination of Machiavelli's "Arte della Guerra." But, fortunately for our country, it is a well-known fact that the officers of the Italian army unite to the manliest qualities the most exquisite kindness and courtesy.

Having no personal acquaintance with either of our two correspondents, we were ignorant at the time that both the German and the Italian officer entertained the greatest admiration and esteem for Machiavelli's "Art of War," even when judging it from a military and technical point of view. And as Major Chiala has

Machiavelli's essay fortunately includes certain fundamental and general ideas of great politico-military value, which can be explained and appreciated without any technical equipment. Accordingly, we will turn to these before undertaking a closer examination of the work.

The art of war, as indeed everything else in Europe, was then undergoing a great and rapid transformation. During the Middle Ages, men-at-arms with horses ironclad, from head to foot, like themselves, had shown how easily they could overthrow foot soldiers by the thrust of their prodigious spears; infantry, therefore, had fallen into discredit, and heavy cavalry was the chief strength of every armed force. Accordingly, the mercenary bands by which Italy was overrun were principally composed of these mounted men-at-arms, and little attention was paid to the militia bands of the old Communes, formed of artisans, who fought on foot and had neither time nor money for training in the more complicated manœuvres of mounted troops. However, in the fifteenth century the foot soldiers of Switzerland marched down from their mountains in defence of their own liberty. And as these men, massed in numerous and compact battalions, with simple breastplates for their sole body-armour, and equipped with enormously long pikes, which they rested on the ground and pointed at the enemy, fought with the utmost valour against Austria and the Dukes of Burgundy, they proved that infantry could not only withstand, but even overcome the strongest cavalry. Thus they won, together with their own independence, the reputation of being the best soldiery in the world, and it was henceforth believed that no victory could be gained without the help of a good number of Swiss. The first to imitate them were the German Landsknechts, next the Spanish infantry, and both with great success. Thus, little by little, the chief strength of an army came to consist in the infantry; the Free Companies, whose extinction for many other reasons was only a question of time, began to lose power and prestige, and even the much lauded men-at-arms of the French were no longer deemed invincible against foot soldiers.

Machiavelli gained some knowledge on these points from his earliest experience of military matters at the camp before Pisa,

never published the critical remarks with which he has favoured us, we have given quotations from them in the notes, headed: Major Chiala's remarks. This, we trust, will give no offence to the modesty that accompanies his learning.

and became more and more impressed by them during his subsequent travels in Switzerland and Tirol. Accordingly he gave prolonged study to the question. In fact, the fundamental idea of his "Art of War" is that the best militia can be formed by arming the people, that at all periods the infantry forms the backbone of an army, and therefore the greatest care should be given to its organization and discipline. It is possible, he says, that in countries where, as in certain tracts of Asia, there are immense plains with a nomad population, cavalry may play the chief part in war ; but in Europe, mounted troops, though useful in skirmishes, reconnaissances, in supporting the infantry at need, and pursuing the beaten enemy, can never decide the fate of a battle. And this he asserts and repeats with so much decision and firmness, that leading military writers declare his expressions to be precisely those of a modern tactician.¹

Starting with this idea, Machiavelli's admiration for the Romans naturally led him to consult the pages of Titus Livy, and still more of Vegetius, on the organization, constitution and discipline of their infantry, and he was soon persuaded that the Roman legion was not only a model for imitation, but one not easily to be surpassed. Nor was he mistaken in this belief. For many centuries after his time the legion remained the study and admiration of all great army reformers. Putting aside for a moment the radical changes introduced by firearms into modern tactics, the Roman legion is even now a model that has never been excelled, and from which much may still be learnt.

Combining with his Roman studies his personal experience of Swiss infantry, the results of repeated observation of German infantry during his travels, and all that he had recently heard of the Spanish, Machiavelli began to plan a model infantry corps, and thus hit upon the idea of his Militia Ordinance which he was continually striving to perfect in theory. And this conception of a novel infantry system was joined to another of greater importance, from which, indeed, it was derived, and which had also been suggested to him by Roman and Swiss examples ; namely, the conception forming the chief aim of his book, and one of the

¹ Major Jähns writes thus : "Wenn man diese Sätze liest, so glaubt man einen Theoretiker aus unsern eignen Tagen zu hören." Jähns, "Machiavelli als militärischer Techniker," in the above quoted number of "Die Grenzboten," p. 555. The author alludes to Machiavelli's remarks upon cavalry in the "Discorsi" (bk. ii. chap. xviii. ; "Opere," vol. iii. p. 244), and in the "Arte della Guerra" (bk. ii. ; "Opere," vol. iv. p. 239).

most constant of his whole life : that the armed nation is the only national and invincible army, the true military strength of the modern State. It is not without reason that some writers have styled this idea prophetic, for although actually a discovery of the Romans, it has only attained triumph in our own days in the Prussian military system now more or less imitated throughout Europe.¹ Thus Machiavelli's conceptions, the political as well as the military, are fused into one in his "Art of War ;" and if the originality of the former is patent to all, so, too, the technical reforms he proposed for the improvement of the infantry of his day have repeatedly received the approbation and applause of modern tacticians.

We have already said that Machiavelli was not a practical soldier, and this is frankly admitted by him in the earliest pages of his work. This fact naturally enhances the merit of the truths he discovered, and is an added proof of the loftiness of his intellect ; but it also betrays him into occasional errors. And it is now time to turn our attention to one of these errors, inasmuch as its consequences partially influence the general character of the work. Machiavelli had very little faith in firearms. He had already said in the "Discourses" that although artillery might be effective against the walls of a fortress or against an army on the defensive in enclosed places, yet it was of little use in the field, or against an attacking force, and that war might be said to consist far more of attack than defence,² as the Romans had shown us by their example. Nor did he by any means alter this opinion in the "Art of War," where, although making very valuable remarks on the manner of employing artillery in the attack and defence of strongholds, he sometimes goes so far as to say that, in the open field, guns produce little besides smoke. And as to port-

¹ In the previously quoted letter, "Machiavelli und der Gedanke der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht," Major Jähns starts by begging his readers to put aside the virtuous indignation usually aroused by the name of Machiavelli, since "nicht von der sittlichen Haltung des Mannes will ich reden, sondern ich will ihn bezeichnen als den ersten modernen Menschen, dem der Gedanke der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht zum Gegenstande wissenschaftlicher Erwägung wurde." And he afterwards adds that to Machiavelli's recognized claim to the title of creator of political science might well be added the same title with regard to military knowledge. "Dies gilt auch von den militär-politischen Ideen Machiavelli's. Sie zeichnen ihn als einen die Zeitgenossen hoch überragenden Geist, welcher die schweren Gebrechen des damaligen Kriegswesens erkannte und die Mittel angab, sie zu heilen" (*Vide commencement of the letter published in the Kölnische Zeitung*).

² "Discorsi," bk. ii. chap. xvii.

able firearms, he makes so little account of them, that more than once we plainly perceive that he would be ready to abolish them altogether, but for his fear of showing too great hostility to what he considers the prejudices of his time. Nevertheless, it is requisite to clearly determine the nature and motives of Machiavelli's blunder, as it is called, in order not to magnify it to an unjust degree. Portable firearms were so imperfect in his day, so difficult to use with speed or profit, that they could not as yet satisfactorily supersede the bow and crossbow. In fact, not only were archers and crossbowmen still employed in all the battles of that century, but more than a hundred years later we find Montecuccoli suggesting that only two-thirds of the infantry should be armed with muskets and the remainder with pikes, which were not relinquished until the invention of bayonets in the eighteenth century.¹ The difficulty of introducing entirely novel modes of warfare has been experienced in our own days with regard to the needle gun.

This weapon was adopted by the Prussians as early as 1840, and its efficacy firmly established during the war with Denmark in 1864; nevertheless Austria only made preparatory trials of it, and had not yet adopted it in the war of 1866. The colossal disaster of Sadowa was required to secure its introduction into the armies of Europe. How great, therefore, must have been the obstacles encountered by the first portable firearms, which, with all their primary imperfections, seemed only fitted to upset the best traditions of warfare, the whole military tactics of the most renowned hosts!

But as regards artillery it is a very different question, and these remarks cannot entirely exonerate Machiavelli on that score. At the battle of Ravenna (1512), the then celebrated field pieces of Alfonso d'Este made vast havoc among the enemy; at Novara (1513), the Swiss lost a great number of men, who, to use Giovio's expression, had been *torn by the artillery*; at Marignano (1515), the French guns helped to decide the fate of the day, and made enormous gaps in the serried ranks of the Swiss. Indeed, from that moment the latter's infantry began to lose their prestige of invincibility.² Now Machiavelli's "Art of War" was written

¹ Major Chiala insists strongly upon this point in his "Remarks."

² Major Jähns remarks *à propos* of Machiavelli's contempt for artillery: "Diese Nichtachtung war nach dem Erfolge von Ravenna ein Anachronismus." "Machiavelli als militärischer Techniker" in "Die Grenzboten," the number

after the battle of Marignano, where likewise the musketeers had their first opportunity of proving the efficacy of their weapons, an efficacy that was still better demonstrated at Pavia in 1525.

The real cause of Machiavelli's disregard for firearms must also be sought in the narrowness of his military experience at the camp before Pisa and in organizing the Florentine militia. It is true that he had enjoyed a near view of the Swiss and German infantry; but only at hurried moments and several years earlier than 1512. At the time of the battle of Ravenna, he was entirely absorbed in preparing for the defence of Prato and Florence; the battles of Novara and Marignano occurred later, when he was removed from his sphere of activity and living in his country retirement, where only a distant echo of these events reached him through political and literary friends. Consequently, Machiavelli understood soldiers and their weapons as they had been before 1512; and it was these that he tried to bring to perfection by examining the conditions under which he knew them and by studying the art of war as practised by the Romans. Had he been actually a military man, he would certainly have had better opportunities of gaining accurate knowledge of the great battles taking place in his time, and perhaps had a clearer presentiment of the future reserved for firearms. Spear and pike, sword and bow, are weapons too simple to be susceptible of much improvement, and accordingly are little different in modern times from what they were in ancient; but firearms, being infinitely more complicated, were naturally capable of enormous improvements, of which the importance might have been foreseen, but of which it was impossible to calculate the extent. Certainly Machiavelli had no opportunities for calculations of this kind, and therefore in determining the value of his military theories, we have to remember the conditions in which they were elaborated and expounded.

At any rate, he was the first to try to formulate a logical and scientific theory of the tactics used in the wars of his day, and of possible improvements in them. His suggestions are based upon what may be called the fundamental and normal branches of the military art, and on this account possess an undeniable value,

before quoted, p. 556. Major Chiala holds that at the battle of Ravenna the artillery had not yet shown its full efficacy, and is more indulgent, therefore, towards Machiavelli. But he adds that after the battle of Marignano, Machiavelli's blunder became far less excusable.

truly marvellous on the part of a man who was never a soldier.¹ But for the great progress of firearms and the radical changes and modifications thus brought about, even the portions of Machiavelli's book now only interesting from the historical point of view would be equally remarkable for their practical value. For he unhesitatingly indicated the only possible road to progress, without the intervention of an element so subversive of the old tactics. Yet, as it stands, this book serves to prove, according to the verdict of the best experts, that the founder of the science of politics is also "the first of modern classics on military subjects."²

In the dedication to Lorenzo Strozzi, one of his friends and protectors, Machiavelli immediately enters on a very clear exposition of the leading political idea and principal object of his book. "It has been a fatal error in Italy," he says, "to have separated civil from military life, converting the latter into a trade as it is carried on by the Free Companies. In this way the soldier becomes violent, threatening, corrupt, the enemy of all quiet life. It behoves us therefore to revert to the old systems of the Romans, who recognized no difference between the citizen and the soldier, and maintained that, of the two, the latter should show himself the more faithful, pacific, and God-fearing. For truly, from whom

¹ Upon this point Major Chiala writes: "After reading the seven books of the 'Arte della Guerra,' it is impossible to deny that on everything relating to the unchangeable portion of the art, Machiavelli writes with so much lucidity and soundness of sense, that even those but slightly acquainted with the conditions of the art of war in those days, are obliged, not only to recognize his superiority of intellect, but also a by no means superficial experience of military matters. Certainly no simply theoretical writer has ever written in this fashion." And at another passage: "The book of the 'Arte della Guerra' seems to me to be a real marvel, not only for its time, but in the fullest sense of the word."

² Such is the opinion repeatedly expressed by Major Jähns, who terminates his essay, "Machiavelli als militärischer Techniker," by a verdict not very unlike that already quoted by us, from the beginning of his letter on Machiavelli: "Alles in Allem genommen, erkennt man, dass Machiavelli, der durch seine begeisterte Verkündigung des Gedankens der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht als ein wahrhaft prophetischen Geist und als einer der wichtigsten Denker auf dem Gebiete des Militärischen Verfassungslebens erscheint, auch das Wesen der kriegerischen Technik in einer für seine Zeit ganz ungewöhnlichen Deutlichkeit durchschaute, und es ist ein neuer, ich möchte sagen psychologischer Beweis für die nahe Verwandtschaft von Kriegskunst und Staatskunst, dass der Begründer des modernen Staatsrecht zugleich der erste moderne militärische Klassiker ist." Before this essay was published, Major Chiala repeatedly expressed the same idea, and added these words: "Come nella parte politica ed organica delle milizie, le vedute del Machiavelli furono ispirate ai veri principii dell' arte della guerra, così anche nel campo tecnico per lui più difficile."

need we demand more faith, more honesty and virtue, than from him who should always be ready to die for his country? More than others he suffers by war, and being in continual danger, has more need than others of the help of God. Desiring therefore to essay to revive among us the virtue of the ancients, the which I cannot deem impossible, and in order not to spend my leisure in idleness, I have determined to transcribe all my knowledge of the art of war. I know well that it is somewhat bold to treat of a matter that has never been my business; nevertheless, writers cannot do so much serious mischief by their words as clumsy captains may frequently effect by their deeds."¹

The work then begins with an eulogium on Cosimo Rucellai, recently deceased at a very early age, and towards whom Machiavelli shows sincere gratitude and a very warm and earnest affection. With a degree of emotion rarely exhibited by him, he says that he cannot mention without tears the name of the deceased, who had all the qualities friends could possibly desire in a good friend, or the country desire in a citizen. "I know not what thing was so exclusively his own (without even excepting his soul) that he would not willingly have bestowed it upon his friends; I know not any enterprise from which he would have shrunk had it seemed to him to be for the interest of his country." And after this the dialogue opens at once. Fabrizio Colonna, the renowned captain, just returned from the Lombard war, is invited by Cosimo to join the circle in the Oricellarii Gardens, and as soon as he appears, begins to discourse of military matters. The first of the seven books into which the work is divided is chiefly devoted to discussion on the kind of men of which an army should be composed. Inflamed by the deepest admiration for the Roman soldiery, Colonna, who is in fact the mouthpiece of Machiavelli and the expounder of his doctrines, remarks that all are now desirous of imitating the ancients in superficial matters, whereas it would be better to try to imitate them in substantial things, namely, in habits of life and soul. We should do as they did, he said, "by honouring and rewarding virtue, and having no contempt for poverty; by esteeming the rules and regulations of military discipline; by compelling the citizens to love one another, to live without splitting into factions, to have less respect for private than for public interests. . . . The which regulations are not hard to enforce, if duly studied and entered

¹ "Opere," vol. iv. p. 187.

upon in a fitting way, since their truth is so apparent that every ordinary mind may perceive it."¹

But the like qualities are never to be found in those who make a trade of war, after the fashion of mercenary troops. These must of necessity be bloodthirsty, rapacious, and dishonest, must always desire war or commit deeds of theft and violence for their subsistence in times of peace. "Can you not all remember the extortion, pillage, and rapine, perpetrated by the Free Companies without there being any possible remedy? In the days of our forefathers, Francesco Sforza, not only deceived the Milanese in whose service he fought, but deprived them of their liberty and made himself lord over them. His father, Attendolo Sforza, compelled the Queen Giovanna, whose pay he took, to throw herself into the arms of the King of Aragon in consequence of his sudden desertion. Braccio di Montone, by means of the same artifices, would have gained possession of the Neapolitan kingdom, but for meeting his death at Aquila. And all this because these men traded in war, and could live by war alone. So long as the Roman Republic preserved its purity, its captains were satisfied with winning victories for their country and then retiring into private life. At the end of the Carthaginian war the times changed; men arose who made fighting their trade, and Rome soon experienced the same dangers into which we have fallen, as in the case of Cæsar and Pompey. For this reason no well-organized State ever permitted its citizens to practise war as a trade. Nor can any existing kingdom be cited as a proof to the contrary, since none observes any good rule. All well-organized States grant their princes absolute power over their armies solely when in camp and during war, since only at such times are sudden decisions imperative, and, consequently, the rule of one man. In other matters the prince should execute nothing without advice; and he should be carefully prevented from having about his person in times of peace any of those that always desire war, and neither can nor will subsist without it."² But even leaving well-regulated States out of the question, it cannot be well for living sovereigns to maintain professional soldiers, especially now that the chief strength of armies consists in the infantry. If things be not ordered in such wise that soldiers may be willing to go home in times of peace and work at some trade for their bread, it necessarily follows that the State must come to ruin in one way or

¹ "Opere," vol. iv. pp. 196, 197.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iv. pp. 202-204.

another. You are forced either to be always at war, always keep your soldiery on full pay, or live in constant danger of their depriving you of your kingdom. Perpetual war is impossible, neither can you keep up a permanent army, so either way you must go to destruction."¹ In Machiavelli's time the greatest source of danger of this kind lay in the infantry. Men-at-arms were frequently nobles, and therefore, especially in France and Germany, able to live at their own expense. Infantry, on the contrary, was composed of the lower class of townsfolk and peasantry, who unless they returned to peaceable employments depended upon war or permanent pay.

The next point discussed is that of how to make the best choice of men, the *deletto*, as Machiavelli puts it, or as we should now say, the military conscription. And hereupon Colonna, alluding to the treatise of Vegetius, and partly paraphrasing, partly translating it, goes on to say: "that it is best to choose natives of temperate climes, since these are men both of courage and prudence, whereas hot climates generate prudent but timid men, and cold countries give birth to daring but imprudent men."² But this rule could hold good only for one who should be master of the world and with entire freedom of choice. To form rules available for all, some mode must be found of selecting the best men of every province, and, as did the ancients, training them by discipline, which is worth more than nature.³

From Vegetius, too, is borrowed the following description of the physical and moral qualities desired in a soldier: "the eyes quick and lively, the neck sinewy, the chest broad, the arms muscular, the fingers long, the stomach small, the hips round, the legs and feet lean, the which things always give a man strength and agility, the two things which are chiefly indispensable in a soldier. Great attention must also be paid to his habits, and to seeing that he hath honesty and decency, otherwise he is but an

¹ "Opere," vol. iv. p. 204.

² Ibid., vol. iv. p. 209. "Omnes nationes quæ vicinæ sunt soli, nimio calore siccatas, amplius quidem sapere, sed minus habere sanguinis dicunt; ac propterea constantiam ac fiduciam cominus non habere pugnandi, quia metuunt vulnera, qui se exiguum sanguinem habere noverunt. Contra, septentrionales populi remoti a solis ardoribus, inconsultiores quidem, sed tamen, largo sanguine redundantes sunt ad bella promptissimi," &c. (Flavii Vegetii Renati Comititis, "De re militari libri quinque." Ex recensione Nicolai Schwebellii-Argentorati, ex typographia Societatis Bipontinæ, 1806. Bk. i. chap. ii. pp. 5, 6).

³ Ibid., vol. iv. pp. 209, 210.

instrument of scandal and an element of corruption ; for let no one believe that with dishonest habits and an unclean mind there can abide any quality in the least worthy of praise." ¹

"You, then," Cosimo Rucellai now objects to Colonna, "positively wish to re-establish the Florentine militia, that so many wise men have pronounced to be useless, and that succeeded so badly upon trial. These wise men cite the Romans who, although armed in the way you recommend, nevertheless forfeited their liberty ; they cite the Venetians, who would never sanction this militia, and the King of France, who disarmed his subjects the better to keep them in subjection. In short, they condemn the Militia Ordinance rather for its inutility than its danger."

To these remarks Fabrizio Colonna replies, that similar opinions can only be maintained by persons devoid of accurate knowledge, or genuine experience of military affairs. "In fact," he says, "we are taught by history and experience, that all States must be based upon national arms, and that by these only can they be securely defended ; nor is it possible to have national armies excepting by means of the Militia Ordinance. If this did not succeed on its first trial in Florence, we must improve, not condemn it, and must also remember that the world has no armies which have been uniformly successful. No wise ruler of States ever doubted but that a country should be defended by its own inhabitants. Had the Venetians comprehended all this they would have established a new empire of the world. In fact, by sea they fought with their own men, and were always victorious ; on land they employed mercenary captains and hireling soldiers ; and then had not a leg left them to stand upon. The Romans,

¹ "Opere," vol. iv. p. 218. The text of Vegetius runs as follows : "Sit ergo adolescens, Martio operi deputandus, vigilantibus oculis, erecta cervice, lato pectore, humeris muscolosis, valentibus brachiis, digitis longioribus, ventre modicus, exilior cruribus, suris et pedibus non superflua carne distentis, sed nervorum duritia collectis" (F. Vegetii, *op. cit.*, lib. i. chap. vi. p. 9). Even the words of Machiavelli, referring to the moral qualities of the soldier in the quotation given above, are copied from the same author. He does not usually quote Vegetius, but in this passage uses the phrase, "as it is said by those who write on war," nearly always in reference to Vegetius. And at p. 10 of the Roman treatise we find these words : "Juventus enim, cui defensio provinciarum, cui bellorum committenda fortuna est, et genere, si copia suppetat, et moribus debet excellere. Honestas enim idoneum militem reddit. Verecundia dum prohibet fugere, facit esse victorem. Quid enim prodest si exerceatur ignavus ? si pluribus stipendiis mereat in castris ? Nunquam exercitus profecit, tempore cuius in probandis tironibus claudicarit electio." Here we have the same idea and often even the identical words employed by Machiavelli.

on the other hand, were far wiser, and being at first only practised in fighting on land, when they were opposed at sea by the Carthaginians, speedily trained their people to naval conflicts, and became equally successful. Then as to the example of France, who does not keep her subjects trained to war, and is therefore obliged to have recourse to professional soldiers, there is no man, unless he be blinded by prejudice, who cannot see that this is the true cause of that kingdom's weakness."¹ To sum up, Fabrizio Colonna maintained that all able-bodied men, between the ages of seventeen and forty, should be drilled on certain stated days, so as to be always in readiness to defend the country.

From this first book of the "Art of War" it is clearly seen, that in the monarchy of Machiavelli—the monarchy approved and recommended by him wherever a republic should be impracticable—the sovereign is surrounded by wise men who assist him with their advice and never allow him absolute rule in times of peace. In war alone, the prince must be at the head of his army and hold absolute command. And whether republic or monarchy, the strength of the State must reside in the armed people that, being trained to discipline, law, and duty, can be trusted to defend the country. Such is the army in which Machiavelli has full confidence, and he desires it to be composed of men who are not merely robust and well-trained soldiers, but above all are virtuous, modest, and disposed to any sacrifice for the public good.² In the "Art of War" he repeatedly insists that virtuous citizens constitute the real strength of armies, and hence the only solid basis of the State. And this implies nothing contradictory to the views expressed in the "Discourses" and in the "Prince." Even a general should, he thinks, be guided by very different rules of conduct from those imposed in private life. Nevertheless, in public life, citizens, princes, and generals should sacrifice everything to the State, to the welfare of the country; and therein consists the moral value of their actions. Let us take, for instance, the honourable soldier who sets forth on a campaign with coolness and resolve,

¹ "Opere," vol. iv. pp. 212-216.

² As we have before noted, Machiavelli's political military schemes are always fused together into a single complete plan, the second scheme being but the logical sequence of the first. A popular, national army, necessarily implies a preponderance of foot soldiers. And history teaches that military changes are the result of social and political transformations. *Vide* on this subject: L. Blanch, "Della scienza militare, considerata ne' suoi rapporti colle altre scienze e col sistema sociale. Discorsi nove." Naples, Porcelli, 1834.

devoid of all personal hatred or rancour. Do we think him less loyal than other men, less generous, less devoted to his duty, because he has to deceive the enemy in order to defeat him, to give rewards to deserters, who are traitors to their country, and to employ spies, who, in their turn, fulfil a necessary and hazardous duty?

Hence, according to Machiavelli, we have no right to deny true moral grandeur to the politician who, in obeying the inexorable, natural, and fatal laws of the art of government, obeys them solely for his country's good, and strives for personal wealth and power merely because he is the personification of the State. This sacrifice of personal to public interest is the universal rule of political, as of military conduct. And this rule can only be observed by him who is genuinely good and honest, although he may seem a villain in the eyes of the crowd. Therefore, it is useless to hope that our country can be powerful or our armies strong unless there be real virtue in us.

The second book now proceeds to speak of the method of equipping and training the men. "It was the custom of the Romans to cover the foot soldier with iron; he carried a shield, a sword, and the short, heavy pike called the *pilum*; the Greeks, on the contrary, and especially the Macedonians, gave him less defensive armour, but a more effective weapon in the spear, called the *sarissa*, of more than fifteen feet in length."¹ It is strange that Machiavelli, notwithstanding a thousand proofs to the contrary, should have refused to believe that the Greeks used shields, because he did not understand why these could be required by men armed with the *sarissa*.² He gives an admirable definition of the real defects of the Greek phalanx, and of its great inferiority to the Roman legion, but is often very inexact as to details. Not only does he rely upon different authors without distinguishing the periods to which they refer, but when it is necessary to support any one of his theories, always seeks to confirm it by the testimony of the ancients. At this point his object is to prove a resemblance between the weapons of the Greeks and those of the Swiss, the better to point out their defects, and consequently the superiority of his own militia when equipped in the Roman fashion.

"The Swiss," he goes on to say, "have armed their battalions

¹ "Opere," vol. iv. ; "Arte della Guerra," lib. ii. p. 231.

² Ibid., vol. iv. ; "Arte della Guerra," lib. ii. p. 231.

in imitation of the Greek phalanx, concentrating their strength in their pikes, and giving very little armour to the men. And, following their example, foot soldiers nowadays have an iron breast-piece, a pike over ten feet in length, and a sword that is also very long. Very few wear armour on the back and arms, none on the head, and these few carry a halberd six feet long with a head like an axe. Besides these halberdiers there is a small band armed with firelocks, who do the work of crossbowmen. This method was introduced by the Swiss after they had proved, at the pikes' point, that infantry were capable of vanquishing mounted men, and having thereby risen to very high reputation were afterwards imitated by the Germans. But the cavalry once checked and routed, pikes are of no use in the *mêlée*, and the pikemen with their scanty armour are exposed to the blows of the enemy. For this reason the Swiss, though always effective against cavalry, are very weak in resisting infantry that is equipped for fighting at close quarters. The Romans cased their men in armour, and provided them with shields for their defence, and swords for hand-to-hand combat. The Spanish are sufficiently well-armed to be able to overcome the Germans at close quarters; but they cannot resist the attack of modern cavalry, which is more powerful than the old, in consequence of its wearing stouter armour, and having also peaked saddles and stirrups such as were unknown in earlier times. When Carmagnola, with six thousand horse and a small body of infantry, had to encounter eighteen thousand Swiss, he was repulsed by the latter's pikes. But being a skilful captain, he made his men-at-arms protected with armour dismount, and in this way defeated the enemy. When the Spanish came to the relief of their Captain Gonsalvo, who was besieged in Barletta, they were met by the French with their men-at-arms and four thousand Germans. The latter, armed with long pikes, quickly broke the ranks of the Spanish infantry, who then, by the aid of small bucklers and their own agility, threw themselves upon their foes so as to have them at sword's length, and made an end of them. The same thing would have occurred at Ravenna, when the Spanish dashed into the midst of the Germans, and could have destroyed them, but for the charge of the enemy's cavalry, with which they were unable to cope in the same manner. It is therefore necessary to have infantry armed in the Roman fashion, able to resist foot soldiers like the Spanish, but also fitted to repulse cavalry like the Swiss. And, as with the Romans, this

infantry should constitute the main strength of the army, because, although cavalry is useful for clearing the way, laying waste the enemy's country, harassing its troops, keeping it always on the alert, and cutting off its provisions, it is the infantry that decides the fate of pitched battles. Neglect of this consideration has brought about the ruin of Italy in our own day, and we have beheld our country plundered, devastated, and overrun by foreigners, solely through the mistake of paying too little attention to foot soldiers, and turning all our soldiers into horsemen."¹

The next subject treated is that of the exercises required for the soldier's training; and on this head Machiavelli contents himself with borrowing from Vegetius, describing and recommending every usage of the Romans,² and winding up by saying that as such exercises were possible among the ancients, "so, too, should they be possible among ourselves, the more especially as we might find examples in many German cities, in which these customs are preserved, and where every inhabitant makes his choice of arms, is inscribed accordingly and sent to drill on his leisure days. But it is not enough to exercise and train the soldiers separately; they must be also exercised and disciplined in masses. Every army should therefore have, as it were, a principal branch, for the collective drilling and training of its men. The Romans had their legion, the Greeks their phalanx, while the Swiss have their battalions, and we ought to follow their example."³ Thus, for the reasons given by him, Machiavelli equips his battalion partly in Grecian, partly in Roman fashion, and composes it of six thousand men, divided into ten companies, just as the Roman legion, composed, he tells us, of from five to six thousand men, was divided into ten cohorts.⁴ "Every company consists of 450 infantry, of whom 400 are heavily armed, or else of 100 equipped with pikes, and 300 with sword and shield. The remaining fifty men, answering to the *velites*, are lightly equipped with firelocks, cross-

¹ "Arte della Guerra," lib. ii. pp. 230-239. The remarks concerning cavalry at p. 239 are among those that, in the opinion of Major Jähns, might well have been written by a modern tactician.

² On comparing Vegetius, lib. i. chap. ix. pp. 12-14, 19, with Machiavelli's "Arte della Guerra," lib. ii. pp. 243-245, it will be seen that the latter imitates and often simply translates the former writer.

³ "Arte della Guerra," p. 246.

⁴ Machiavelli here alludes to the legion described by Vegetius (lib. ii. chap. vi.), not to that of Servius Tullius, which was of three thousand foot, was easier to handle and better disciplined.

bows, or similar weapons. The pikemen occupy the five foremost ranks, twenty in each ; the bearers of swords and shields the other fifteen. But, in order that the battalion may be protected on all sides from the enemy's horse, it is strengthened by 1500 extra foot soldiers, of whom 1000 are armed with pikes, and disposed on the flanks of the battalion, and 500 *velites* who, together with the others, form the wings. Once or twice yearly the whole battalion must be called under arms, and manœuvred as in time of war. To have a courageous army it is less necessary for it to consist of brave men than to be well disciplined, since if, for instance, I am among the foremost combatants, and know upon whom I have to fall back in case of repulse, and who will take my place afterwards, I shall always fight daringly, conscious that succour is at hand." ¹ Just as in the "Discourses" Machiavelli attributes extraordinary efficacy to good political codes, crediting them with an inherent power to bestow liberty and generate virtue, so in the "Art of War" he attributed extraordinary efficacy to good military discipline, and believes it all-sufficient both to create soldiers and endow them with courage.

He now proceeds to marshal his company, enumerating the various forms it may take, the various manœuvres it must execute, and describing all its evolutions with considerable minuteness. "More than all else is it necessary to have soldiers who will quickly conform to discipline ; and it is requisite to keep them together in these companies, to drill them in their ranks, and make them step quickly, both forwards and backwards, and go over difficult ground without breaking line ; for men who can do this well are practised soldiers, and even although they have never set eyes on the enemy, may be said to be veteran soldiers. . . . This is as concerns getting them together when they are in small file, and on the march. But if after being drawn up in mass, their ranks should be broken by some accident, whether from the nature of the ground or by attack of the enemy, then it is a most important and difficult task to make them recover themselves quickly, and a matter demanding great practice and experience, even as it was much studied by the ancients." ²

Machiavelli had great reason to insist so strongly upon this point. Armies were then ordered in such fashion, that if, during battle, the enemy succeeded in attacking them on the flank, all

¹ "Arte della Guerra," lib. ii. pp. 250, 251.

² Ibid., lib. ii. p. 257.

was lost, on account of the great difficulty of changing front. Thus, when the foremost ranks had to fall back, there was general confusion, and nothing more could be done.¹ By continually urging the necessity of making the army easy to handle and capable of instantaneous change of front, in every fresh emergency or peril, the author of the "Art of War" proved that he knew the best mode of improving the tactics of his time.

On careful examination of Machiavelli's system of forming his battalion, he will be found to contradict himself upon one point. He places his sole reliance on the infantry and wishes it to be equipped in the Roman fashion, so as to be very easily handled, and readier for attack than defence, and he never seems to wish to count much on the cavalry. Yet, not only does he burden his militia bands with armour, but hedges them in with pikemen on every side, for their better defence against those cavalry charges which cause him such continual anxiety. He even reproaches the Spanish infantry for their negligence on this score, since they were often thrown into disorder by cavalry attacks, although able to recover themselves at close quarters. And this was because, while clearly discerning the future power of infantry, he could not in practice altogether refuse to recognize the important part still played by cavalry in the wars of the period, and therefore often felt obliged to recur to the question of the best means of opposing the onslaught of men-at-arms.² The same idea also prevailed in the formation of the Swiss battalions that Machiavelli so heartily admired, and he urged it all the more strongly because of the slight value attributed by him to firearms. But leaving aside this theoretical contradiction, it is certain that the battalion of Machiavelli is a positive improvement on that of the Swiss, on account of its greater flexibility, ease of movement, and adaptability.³ So

¹ All historians of the art of war agree upon this point, and Louis Napoleon Bonaparte makes the same remark in his work: "Du présent, du passé et de l'avenir de l'artillerie," vol. i. p. 83.

² "Machiavelli nimmt also die Legionartaktik der Römer zum Vorbilde. Aber trotzdem bleibt auch seine Schlachtordnung mehr auf die Defensive als auf den Angriff eingerichtet; denn selbst dieser grosse Geist vermag sich nicht ganz frei zu machen von dem Banne der mittelalterlichen Tradition, welche dem Fussvolke unbedingt die inferiore Stellung gegenüber der Reiterei zuwies. Er vermag das römische Vorbild nicht zu erreichen" (Jähns, "Machiavelli als militärischer Techniker," p. 554). Major Chiala frequently notices the same contradiction.

³ "Let us compare," says Major Chiala, "the formation proposed by Machiavelli with that adopted by the Swiss, and we can easily see that for lightness and divisibility (*frazionabilità*) the former immensely surpasses the latter. The Swiss

good was it, in fact, that but for the progress of firearms, the logical and natural development of the art of war would have inevitably led it into the road indicated by him, and to the adoption of his proposed reforms which are therefore of very considerable value.¹ The perfecting of muskets and guns afterwards led to the disuse of compact battalions, and showed the need of facing the enemy with thinner and more extended ranks. This, however, was only effected at a much later period.

At this point the speakers moot a question similar to that already started by Machiavelli in the "Discourses." He had inquired : how it was that the ancients possessed greater political liberty and virtue than the moderns ? And the reply had been : because they had republican institutions, and because Pagan creeds encouraged force, patriotism, and even ferocity, whereas Christianity thinks rather of Heaven than earth, and accords to meekness a higher place than to force. Only among the Swiss and the Germans are any instances of ancient virtue still to be found. And in the "Art of War" Cosimo Rucellai asks in the same way : how is it that whereas Europe had so many great captains in old times, and Asia and Africa so few, there should be few anywhere at the present day ? "The ancients," replies Fabrizio Colonna, "had in Europe many kingdoms or republics which, in making war upon one another, cultivated military virtues ; the nations of the East, on the contrary, had only one or two great empires. Africa was in a more fortunate condition in this respect, thanks to the Carthaginian Republic. A greater number of excellent men are generated in republics than in monarchies, since in the former, virtue is generally held in honour, whereas in monarchies it is feared ; whence it comes that virtuous men flourish in the one, while they are extinguished in the other."² And when the Roman Empire having waxed mighty in Europe and become master of the world, enemies were no longer dreaded, then military virtue disappeared

method of formation must have been very primitive, although it was the approved method of the period, that of moving in great squares of about 10,000 men each ! How much lighter, handier, and more divisible is the formation recommended by Machiavelli ! "

¹ "We may say that but for the intervention of the new element of firearms, the art of war would have developed in the direction of the model proposed by Machiavelli. It is certain that from the Swiss phalanx we should gradually have come to configurations of a lighter, more elastic, better articulated kind ; in short, to formations approaching nearer and nearer to the type of the legion, the exact *quia simile* of that proposed by Machiavelli" ("Remarks," by Major Chiala).

² "Arte della Guerra," lib. ii. p. 271.

from the same causes which had destroyed it among the nations of the East. It is true that the barbarians again divided the empire ; but a virtue that has once died away is not easily revived. Besides which, the Christian religion does not prescribe the same duty of resistance imposed by the ancient creeds, and therefore beneath its sway affairs are not carried on with the old ferocity.¹ There are now great kingdoms having no fear of their neighbours, and small cities depending upon potentates for their defence ; and thus there is less occasion for the conflicts serving to promote military virtue. Behold Germany, where, because there are many principalities and republics, there is much military virtue, and you will perceive that whatever good there may be in the present military scheme, is derived from the example of those nations, who, being jealously attached to their governments, and dreading slavery as it is not dreaded elsewhere, all cherish their honour and independence."²

At the close of the second book, Cosimo reminds Fabrizio that he has not yet touched on the question of cavalry. And the latter replies that he has not mentioned it, because it is of slighter importance than infantry, and also in a far better condition. "If not stronger than that of the ancients it is certainly as strong." Therefore he would make little or no alteration in it. He would introduce a few matchlock-men among the light horse, but rather to scare the country-folk than to produce any real effect. He would wish every battalion to include 150 men-at-arms and 150 light horse ; he would wish to see a great diminution in Italy of the excessive number of horses and waggons employed in transporting the arms and baggage of the cavalry. But he has no other suggestion to add. The studies of Machiavelli, his principal experience, and consequently the proposals he wished to make, chiefly regarded the infantry.

In the third book we find the army arrayed in order of battle, to meet the enemy in the field. The greatest blunder that can be perpetrated, according to Machiavelli, is that of presenting a single front to the enemy, as was the practice in his time, a single line of battle, compelling the entire army to risk everything at the same moment. And this came about because of their incapacity to imitate the Romans, who divided their legion into the *Acies*, or vanguard, *Principes*, or centre, and *Trairii*, or rearguard. The first stood of course to the front, and in serried ranks ; the centre were formed in looser ranks, so as to be able to include the first,

¹ "Arte della Guerra," lib. ii. p. 273.

² Ibid., p. 274.

should these suffer repulse ; the ranks of the rearguard were still thinner, so as to leave space to receive both *Acies* and *Principes*. The Greeks, being armed with long spears, did not renew their formation in this way ; but instead, every fallen soldier was replaced by the one behind him, and thus all the ranks closed up, excepting the hindermost, which was gradually thinned. The Romans also began by following this plan, but then it ceased to please them and they divided their legions into cohorts and *manipuli*, deeming that the body with most life was that containing most souls and composed of the greatest number of parts, each of which could exist by itself.¹ The Swiss, he goes on to say, form their great battalions on the plan of the Greek phalanx, and divide their army into three battalions placed in the following order : the second to the right and in the rear of the first, the third still further in the rear to the left. The first, when retreating cannot fall back among the second and third ; but these advance instead to reinforce it when necessary. And therefore, just as the compactness of the phalanx had to give way to the mobility and flexibility of the Roman legion, so the unwieldy Swiss battalions must give way to our militia bands, the which can turn about and fight in all directions, can thrice form a new front when obliged to fall back, can assume any shape, receive cavalry charges with the pike, and repulse infantry with the sword.²

Machiavelli composes his regular army of four battalions, each divided into ten companies, like the ten cohorts of the legion described by Vegetius. The total force would amount to 24,000 foot and 1200 horse, but to simplify matters he only takes two battalions into consideration : that is, 12,000 foot and 600 horse, since the same remarks would hold good for double that number of men. He therefore places ten companies in the front, six immediately behind, and

¹ "Arte della Guerra," lib. iii. p. 280. There is some confusion and inaccuracy here. The author does not discriminate between the legion as it was formed in the times of Servius Tullus, and what it afterwards became when divided into cohorts. The former, divided into *manipuli*, was composed of 3000 foot soldiers, that is, of 1200 *Acies*, 1200 *Principes* and 600 *Triarii*. It is not true that the *Principes* were fewer in number. It is true, however, that they were disposed so as to be able to open their ranks to the *Acies*, in case of these being obliged to fall back, and that both bodies could fall back among the *Triarii*, who were fewer in number and arranged in far looser ranks. Machiavelli seems to refer sometimes to this legion, sometimes to that described by Vegetius.

² Here, too, he continually copies from Vegetius. The "Arte della Guerra" may be verified, by comparing pp. 278, 279, 281, 282 and 283 with Vegetius, "De re militari," above-mentioned edition, pp. 21, 22, 31, 33, 35, 87, 88, 89.

four to the rear, so that the foremost rank may fall back into the second and both into the third. Each battalion has its pikemen in the front ranks and its shield-bearers in the others. On either flank of the army are planted the bands called pikemen extraordinary, in order to withstand the enemy's cavalry on all sides. Machiavelli stations his cavalry in the wings, the artillery to the front. During the *mêlée*, these companies re-form in that which he calls the Roman order : that is, the front ranks fall back into the second, and both into the third. In each, however, the men follow the method that he has said to be peculiar to the Greek phalanx, the hinder man advancing to take the place of the fallen comrade in front.

The opposing armies are now supposed to be face to face, and Fabrizio Colonna explains the movements of that under his own command. The guns are discharged without much effect save the production of smoke. Soon after, the *milites* (swordsmen) and the light horse advance, scatter in skirmishing order and charge the enemy, whose batteries have already opened fire, although their projectiles pass over the heads of Fabrizio's infantry. The pikes vigorously repulse the attack ; but when hand-to-hand fighting begins, they can do nothing and therefore fall back to make room for the infantry armed with swords and shields, who then rout the enemy.

After Fabrizio Colonna's description of this battle, which is given with much fervour and minuteness, Luigi Alamanni inquires : " Why have you allowed your batteries to be silent after a single volley ? why have you planted those of the enemy in such fashion that their shots pass over the heads of your men ? I have always heard the weapons and battle order of the ancients mentioned with contempt, for it was said that they would now be powerless against artillery which can tear through the ranks and penetrate breast-plates." " It is," replies Fabrizio, " because I allowed only one discharge, and was even doubtful as to allowing that, since it is more important for me to avoid receiving injury from the guns of the enemy than to inflict injury upon him with mine.* Hence it is necessary to march rapidly on his batteries and in loose ranks, so that he may have no time to fire, or that in any case his missiles may only strike scattered men. And as I have said, I hesitated whether to fire a single discharge, because I know that the smoke of the guns screens the enemy from your view. And I have supposed his balls to pass over the heads of my men because that in fact is

* "Arte della Guerra," lib. iii. p. 294.

what nearly always occurs. For truly cannon are so difficult of management, that if you aim ever so little too high their shots pass over the enemy's head, and if you lower them in the least they fire into the ground. And they are altogether useless in a general engagement.

"I am well aware that many hold the ancient order of battle to be quite ineffectual against artillery, just as though any new order of battle had been discovered that could stand fire with success. If you are acquainted with any such order, I should be glad to learn it, for up to this moment I have never seen any, nor believe that any be possible. I should wish you to inform me why the foot soldiers of the present day still wear iron breastplates and corselets, and why mounted troops are always cased in armour? The Swiss, like the ancients, formed in close battalions of six to eight thousand men, and all have followed their example. There is nothing so dangerous as to face artillery in close order, yet that is the prevailing practice of our time. And if it affords no protection against artillery—against which, indeed, there can be no real defence—it is always effectual against infantry, cavalry, pikes, swords, cross-bows, &c. Besides, if it is still possible to sit down before a city, and within range of batteries which may inflict damage on you, without being damaged in return, so is it still easier to encamp in the open field, without losing heart and without presuming the possibility of ever forsaking the old methods. This army of ours, therefore, will always have an advantage over others of modern times, since being better disciplined and better armed it can check the enemy at the first shock and rout him at close quarters; can renew the attack thrice without being thrown into disorder; can easily change front and fight on all sides."¹

In the fourth and fifth books the handling of the whole army is discussed, and always in conformity with Roman examples. For on this head, never having witnessed a great war, nor the manœuvres of large forces, Machiavelli had little that was novel to suggest from his own experience. The aim he keeps most constantly in view, is that of enabling his army to execute the most complicated manœuvres with great rapidity, even when in presence of the enemy. For this reason, he always objects to a very extended front, considering it to be a source of the utmost danger.² His prejudice against firearms did not allow him to

¹ "Arte della Guerra," lib. iii. pp. 293-301.

² *Ibid.*, iv. p. 314.

foresee that they would lead to the necessity of ever wider and shallower lines.

When the army is ill-provided with cavalry Machiavelli advises that it should be posted among trees and vineyards if possible, as were the Spaniards at the battle of Cerignola. He counsels the employment of the strongest portion of his own army against the weakest part of the opposing force, the better, while falling back on one side, to outflank it on the other.¹ And this was a manœuvre always practised by great captains. Some of his other observations seem suggested rather by plain common sense than by the art of war, although, even as regards the latter, the natural talent of a commander and his knowledge of mankind have always been and will ever be of higher importance than mere technical skill. Machiavelli recommends secrecy in all military enterprises, study of and familiarity with the theatre of war, and says that above all it is highly expedient to place the soldier in the alternative of only being able to find safety in success. "There may be many motives to urge you on, but strongest of all is that which compels you to conquer or to die."² The examples adduced in these two books are generally drawn from ancient history.

And so too in the sixth book, when treating of the method of quartering troops, Machiavelli tries to remain faithful to the Romans, although compelled more than once to abandon their teachings on account of the changed condition of the times. Colonna begins by acknowledging that it might perhaps be better "first to encamp the army, then to march it, and lastly to take it into action." But wishing to show how, while on the march, it was possible to suddenly change from marching order to order of battle, he was induced to begin by drawing it up in fighting array as soon as he possibly could.³ Accordingly he now treats the question of encampments without adding anything new that is worthy of special mention. Here he makes arrangements, no longer for two only, but for four battalions, that is for his entire regular army of 24,000 foot and about 2,000 horse. As the Roman armies consisted of 24,000 foot, and even in extraordinary cases, according to him, seldom exceeded 50,000, and with that number succeeded in vanquishing 200,000 Gauls, so, too, the moderns should follow their example.⁴ "It is true that the nations of the East and the West were accustomed to make war with armed multi-

¹ "Arte della Guerra," lib. iv. p. 316.

² Ibid., p. 332.

³ Ibid., p. 360.

⁴ Ibid., lib. vi. p. 380; Vegetius, bk. ii. ch. iv.

tudes ; but the latter depended entirely on their inborn, savage ferocity, the former on the great and general reverence felt for their rulers, and the passive obedience yielded unto them. For the southern populations of Italy and Greece, who were wanting both in native hardihood and passive obedience, it was necessary to recur to discipline, by which the well-organized few were enabled to overcome the fury and obduracy of the many. The ancients succeeded in everything better than ourselves, and especially in warfare ; and whoever would imitate them must not collect too numerous armies, for then discipline is disordered and confusion engendered.¹ And towards the firm maintenance of this discipline, Machiavelli suggests that the right of punishment, and to some extent the judicial function, should be vested in a popular tribunal, after the Roman fashion, and according to the practice of the Swiss, among whom offenders against discipline were put to death by their own comrades. "And this," he says, "is a well-conceived idea, for the criminal will find no supporters among those who have punished him."² We find certain counsels or suggestions in this book serving to emphasize the great difference of the morality of those times, whether in war or in peace, from that of our own day. Machiavelli, for instance, tells us that some troops abandoned their camp and all its stores to the enemy, in order to take him by surprise when gorged with food and wine, and adds, without comment, that they sometimes ensured success by first mixing poison in the wine.³

A more valuable portion of the "Art of War" is that comprised in the seventh and last book, in which the author preludes his final pages by the exposition of some very remarkable theories of fortification. Civil and military engineers, both in Italy and other countries, had long directed their attention to the study of works of defence. But the employment of artillery led to the radical transformation of these also. Lofty old walls were easily demolished by cannon, and loftier towers no longer served to damage the enemy, since it was impossible to carry guns up to their roofs ; and stones and other missiles which could be hurled from them were powerless against an enemy able to remain at some distance. Therefore less elevated and more massive constructions were required, upon which it should be possible to plant heavy pieces of cannon. Machiavelli had some experience of all

¹ "Arte della Guerra," lib. vi. p. 380.

² Ibid., p. 376.

³ Ibid., p. 380.

this, both in the camp, before Pisa, and while preparing for the defence of Florence and Prato against the Spanish in 1512. And at a later period he was again obliged to study the question with the celebrated Pietro Navarro, in planning the defence of his native city against the hosts of Charles V.

There is certainly no lack of value and originality in the ideas upon this subject set down in the "*Arte della Guerra*,"¹ although they occasionally seem to refer to a state of things anterior to the development to which the science of fortification had at that time attained. Machiavelli still wished all walls to be too high to be scaled.² For once, however, he here admits the value of artillery, of which he says, "so great is the fury, that a single wall can in no way withstand it."³ And more than that, he not only recognized what was the fundamental problem of that period, but even suggested a solution of his own. "If the walls are too high," he observes, "it is impossible to plant heavy artillery upon them, and no resistance can be made to that of the enemy, which will easily open a breach; if they are too low they are easily scaled." It had long been sought to remedy this danger by the *rempart* of the French. The wall, still very high, was packed with earth on the inner side, and thus thickened and fortified against the enemy's fire. But this system had one serious defect, already noted by others, and that had come under Machiavelli's personal observation at Pisa. On the opening of a breach in a wall of this sort, the broken fragments always fell in the direction whence the shots came, followed by a shower of earth from the rampart. By this means the outer moat was filled up, and it was easy for the enemy to storm the breach.

Accordingly, Machiavelli proposed a new system, which he had twice seen tried at Pisa on a very small scale in 1500 and 1505.⁴ On these occasions the Florentines had to retreat after making a wide breach in the city wall, because the Pisans had dug a trench behind the wall, and raised an earthwork beyond. The same experiment had been tried on a larger scale, and with still greater

¹ "Kühn und scharfsinnig sind seine fortificatorischen Ideen." This is the verdict of Major Jähns in his before-quoted essay in the "*Grenzboten*," p. 556.

² "D'après Machiavelli qui dans son '*Art de la Guerre*' nous a donné des renseignements applicables à une époque un peu antérieure à celle où il écrit, le mur doit être aussi haut que possible," &c. (Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, "*Du présent, du passé et de l'avenir de l'artillerie*," vol. ii. p. 106).

³ "*Arte della Guerra*," lib. vii. p. 398.

⁴ Nardi, "*Storia di Firenze*," vol. i. pp. 225, 362.

success, at Padua in the year 1509, when the whole defence of the city had been conducted on the new principle, and compelled Maximilian's very powerful army to beat an ignominious retreat. Machiavelli, as it is well known, was intimately acquainted with every detail of the Pisan war, and being at Mantua and Verona in the course of 1509, was able to gain accurate information concerning the celebrated defence of Padua. For this made a great sensation at the time:¹ Guicciardini has left us a most minute account of it, and by certain letters he wrote to Machiavelli, we see that he sought information about it at the time of its occurrence.²

The system suggested by Machiavelli was this. Walls must be bastioned (*ritorte*) and have many angles, so that the attacking force may be within range from various directions. He also proposed two lines of circumvallation with a wide trench between them. The outer wall was to be at least six feet thick, surmounted by towers at intervals of four hundred feet, and built as high as possible to prevent the enemy from scaling it. Instead of having a trench outside, it was to have one within, and this was to be sixty feet wide and twelve deep, with casemates at the bottom four hundred feet apart. The earth excavated in making the trench was to be thrown up on the side towards the city to serve for the inner walls or earthworks, which were to be sufficiently high to mask the men, and sufficiently solid to bear the heavy artillery that was to respond to the enemy's fire. In this way, he said, should a breach be made in the outer wall, it will happen, as at Pisa, that the masonry, by falling on the side on which it is struck, instead of filling up the ditch behind, will form a rampart increasing its depth, and the enemy will have to face, first this new rampart, then the trench, and after that the second wall defended by the heaviest guns.³

Machiavelli does not approve of outer forts or other detached works at a distance from the walls, because if these are captured the fortress also is conquered. Accordingly, the ground should be cleared and levelled for the space of a mile from the walls.⁴ And in the opinion of modern writers this idea also was new and original at that day. It seems that in Germany something on the plan of Machiavelli's proposed system was suggested by the

¹ "Storia d'Italia," bk. viii. chap. iv.

² *Vide* document vi. in Appendix (II.) of Italian edition.

³ "Arte della Guerra," bk. vii. pp. 394, 395.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

great intellect of Albert Dürer, who may also have derived the idea from the attack and defence of Padua. At any rate, it is certain that the ideas scientifically expounded in the "Art of War" afford additional proof of Machiavelli's marvellous acumen and admirably practical mind.

But so rapid were the changes then introduced by artillery in every system of fortification, that there was no time for the trial of these intermediate schemes, however ingenious they might be, and however successful they may have proved on first experiment.¹

This would be the place to quote a series of observations made by Machiavelli on improvements in the construction of loopholes and portcullises, of wheels and trucks for the transport of artillery, of draw-bridges, &c. And by these it would be seen that he never allowed any opportunity of observation to escape him, noted all that he saw, and that his remarks were always ingenious and acute and never wanting in practical merit. But we prefer to hasten to the conclusion of the work, which Machiavelli prefaces by a few military maxims or aphorisms of the following kind: "He who starts in disorderly pursuit of the beaten enemy must wish to change from victor to vanquished. Alter your plan, when you perceive that it has been foreseen by the enemy. Sudden accidents are hard to remedy, but anticipated ones are easy to cure. Men, iron, money, and bread are the sinews of war; but the first two are the most necessary of all, for men and iron can gain both money and bread; whereas bread and money cannot serve to obtain men and iron."²

And now Colonna hastens to make an end, saying that although he might have explained many other matters relating to ancient

¹ This is the judgment pronounced by Major Jähns at the close of his previously quoted essay:

"Machiavelli's Vorschläge ähneln in mancher Beziehung denjenigen, welche Dürer zur Verstärkung vorhandener alter Stadtbefestigungen macht; wahrscheinlich hatten beide ihr Vorbild in Padua, dessen vergebliche Belagerung im Jahre 1509 durch Kaiser Maximilian so grosses Aufsehen gemacht hatte; denn diese Stadt war in einer Weise reparirt, welche der von Machiavelli empfohlenen sehr nahe kommt. Wie einsichtig und klardenkend übrigens Machiavelli in Dingen der Befestigungskunst war, lehrt sein Protokoll über die Besichtigung der Fortifikationen von Florenz durch Navarro, und sein Schreiben an Guicciardini über denselben Gegenstand (1526). Merkwürdig erscheint es, dass er bereits mit Entschiedenheit, die Forderung eines Rayongesetzes ausspricht und zwar eines viel strengern als es irgend eine neuere Verordnung gethan hat.—Bis zu einer Meile Entfernung von der Festung darf weder Mauerwerk aufgeführt, noch auch das Feld bestellt werden."

² "Arte della Guerra," lib. vii. pp. 413, 414.

warfare, his sole object was to speak of what was requisite for the good organization of modern armies. He has said nothing of the naval service, being utterly ignorant of it.¹ If you wish to learn what are the qualities required in a good captain, I can be very brief, since it only behoves me to tell you that he must know all the things described above; but that neither will these suffice unless his own wits help him to fresh discoveries, for no one has ever risen to greatness in his profession without invention, and this gift is above all indispensable in war.* As I have shown you, there would be no difficulty in reorganizing the militia on the ancient plan; but in order to do so, you would need to be a prince powerful enough to get together fifteen or twenty thousand youths for the purpose of making them good soldiers. And no greater glory could be imagined; since if it be praiseworthy to win a battle with a good army, still more admirable is it to have created a victorious army. Pelopidas, Epaminondas, Philip of Macedon the sire of Alexander, and Cyrus, king of the Persians, were of this number. They won success by their sagacity, and by having subjects adapted to their purpose; but no one of them, however excellent, could have accomplished any praiseworthy undertaking in a land similar to Italy, full of corrupt men unused to any honourable obedience. Here it is not enough to be able to command an army; it is requisite first to know how, and have the power to form one, and therefore it is necessary to begin by being prince of an extensive State. I could not be a leader of this kind since I have always commanded foreign armies, mercenary adventurers, men bound to others and not to me. And I leave you to judge whether it be possible to introduce any useful reform among soldiers of their stamp! How could I force them to carry more weapons than usual, or to submit to longer hours of drill? When could they be forced to abstain from the deeds of lust and insolence and cruelty daily committed by them? When could they be made so obedient to discipline, that an apple-tree laden with fruit might stand untouched in the midst of their encampment, as we read was frequently the case among the ancients? What promises can I hold out to them, when, at the end of the war, they have nothing more to do with me?

"How can I teach shame to men born and reared in shamelessness? . . . In the name of what God and of what saints can I make them swear faith? In the name of those they worship, or

¹ "Arte della Guerra," lib. vii. p. 415.

² Ibid., p. 416.

of those they blaspheme? Of the gods they may worship, I know nothing; but I well know that they blaspheme against all. . . . How can those who take God's name in vain feel reverence for men? Into what good shape then would it be possible to mould such material?"¹

"The Swiss and Spanish, although far from perfect, are much better than Italians, who from lack of good discipline are the disgrace of the world. Not that the people are to blame, but rather the princes, who have reaped their punishment by losing their States with ignominy and without giving any proof of virtue. And the excessive badness of all existing methods of training is clearly shown by the fact that after the numerous wars occurring in Italy, from the descent of Charles VIII. to the present day, our armies, instead of improving by practice in warfare, have grown continually worse. Nor is there any other remedy than the one which I have indicated, that, namely, of finding a prince with the ability and power to form an army of rough men, as yet unspoiled by the present bad methods of training. It is easier to mould rough and uncultured minds into a fresh shape than corrupt minds, just as a good sculptor can carve a better statue from a block of unhewn marble than from one badly cut into shape."

"Our Italian princes, before experiencing the shocks of foreign wars, were accustomed to believe that it was sufficient for a prince to be able to devise a sharp answer in his writing office, to pen a fine epistle, show wit and readiness in his words and sayings, be able to lay schemes, deck himself with gold and gems, sleep and eat with greater luxury than other men, surround himself with many sensual delights, rule his subjects with avarice and haughtiness, become rotten with sloth, confer military promotion as a favour; . . . nor did the poor wretches foresee that they were thus preparing themselves to fall a prey to the first enemy that should assail them. Hence, in the year 1494, came terrible alarms, sudden flights, and miraculous defeats, and thus three of the most powerful States of Italy have been repeatedly pillaged and laid waste."

"And still worse is it that the surviving princes persist in the same error and in the same disorder: nor do they reflect how those who wished to preserve their States in the olden times, held the first rank among combatants, and when fortune went against

¹ "Arte della Guerra," lib. vii. pp. 418, 419.

them, preferred to lose their life together with their State, so that they either lived or died with honour. Although certain of them might be charged with exceeding ambition or ferocity, they could not be accused of supineness nor of any slothful habit fitted to render men enervated and impotent. And had our princes ever read and believed these things, it would have been impossible for them not to have altered their way of life, and thus changed the fortunes of their States.

"But since you have complained of your Militia Ordinance, I will tell you, that if having truly trained it in the way described by me above, it has nevertheless failed to succeed, then, indeed, you have a right to complain: but that if you have not trained and disciplined it as I have directed, then it might move complaint against you, for having created an abortion instead of a perfect shape. So the Venetians and the Duke of Ferrara began in the right way and then ceased to persist in it, wherefore they, not their men, were to blame." "And I declare to you that whichever of the princes now holding States in Italy shall enter first upon this road, he will be first to become lord of this country; and it will be with his State as with the kingdom of Macedon, the which, coming under the sway of Philip who had been taught how to train armies by Epaminondas the Theban, rose to such power by means of this discipline and training, that in a few years Philip was master of the whole of the other Grecian lands which were given up to idleness and play acting, and left his son a foundation enabling him to make himself lord of the world. He then, who, being a prince, should yet despise these ideas, despises his kingdom; if a citizen, his city. And I am ill-content with nature, for either she should have withheld from me knowledge of these things, or given me power to execute them. Nor, being aged, can I longer hope for any opportunity of executing them, and therefore I have been liberal with you, who, being young and gifted, may be able, if my words have found favour with you, to forward or suggest them at the fitting moment in aid of your princes. And I would wish you to feel neither dismay nor distrust, for this land seems born to give new life to dead things, as has been seen in poetry and painting and sculpture. But as regards myself, being already advanced in years, I certainly feel no hope. Yet truly, had fortune in past times granted me a State wide enough for a similar enterprise, I believe that I could have speedily shown the world the great value of ancient military methods; and

doubtless I should either have gloriously aggrandized my State or lost it without dishonour."¹

Here, then, we behold upon the stage the kingly deliverer, who is to save the country by force of arms, after the likeness of Philip of Macedon. And this is the connecting link between the "Art of War" and the "Prince":—The first Italian who will follow my councils, shall, to his immortal honour, succeed in the magnanimous enterprise of freeing his country.—This, Machiavelli had said to Giuliano and Lorenzo dei Medici; this, he had repeated to his friends in the Oricellarii Gardens, and written in his "Discourse on the reforming of Florence," to Cardinal dei Medici and Leo X.; this he again repeats in the "Art of War." And if in this last work his idea shines forth more clearly than elsewhere, and his admiration for virtue appears more explicit, his patriotism purer and more ardent, this solely results from the subject that he had to treat. But if he could speak so plainly now that he was finally in contact with the Medici, and for the first time in his life had certain hopes of their favour, surely no one need believe that he could have intended to express different ideas, or seen reason to disguise his patriotism, when writing the "Discourses" and the "Prince" during the lifetime of Giuliano and Lorenzo, of whom the former, at least, was undoubtedly of a gentler disposition than either Cardinal or Pope.

¹ "Arte della Guerra," lib. vii. pp. 419-423.





CHAPTER IX.

Machiavelli is commissioned to write his "Histories"—Soderini tries to dissuade him from accepting—His journey to Carpi and correspondence with Guicciardini—Pope Adrian VI.—New proposals of reform in Florence—Plot against the Medici, and condemnation of the conspirators.



WHILE many men, including Cardinal dei Medici himself, were reading and pondering the "Art of War," the "Life of Castruccio Castracani" had already, as we have seen, passed through the hands of all the guests of the Oricellarii Gardens, and been already a subject of dispute among them. All, however, agreed in considering it a positive proof of Machiavelli's singular aptitude for the historic style, and accordingly encouraged him to again try his skill in that way. Many of these friends were persons of influence in Florence at the time, and their verdict obtained some useful results for him. In fact, in the November of 1520 he was commissioned by the directors of the Studio to write a history of Florence. Cardinal dei Medici, as provisional Archbishop of Florence, was also head of the Studio, and conferred Academic degrees, in virtue of a bull of Leo X. (31st of January, 1515), confirming the privileges already granted by the Emperor, Charles IV.¹ Therefore it must have been chiefly owing to the Cardinal that this commission was given to Machiavelli, who, indeed, when the former became Pope Clement VII., dedicated the "Histories" to him, and at a later period received a subsidy from him for their continuation. The negotiations were conducted by Francesco del

¹ Prezziner, "Storia del Pubblico Studio," &c., vol. i. pp. 201, 202, document xii.

Nero, administrator of the Studio, who was related to Machiavelli. The latter drew up his own stipulations, namely, that for a number of years and in return for a salary, the amount of which is not stated, he was to employ himself upon the history of Florence, "from whatever period he might think fit to select, and either in the Latin or Tuscan tongue, according to his taste."¹ The directors came to their decision on the 8th of November, 1520, engaging Machiavelli (*conduccendolo*) for two years, one certain, the other at their pleasure, with a yearly salary of one hundred florins, and the obligation of being at their orders, in case they should demand other work from him.²

¹ These stipulations are in a letter of Machiavelli's to Del Nero, that is, in the Florence Archives, and was first published by Professor Corazzini in his "Miscellanea di cose inedite e rare" (Florence, 1853), p. 114. It was afterwards given in completer form in the "Opere" of Machiavelli (Florence, Usigli, 1857, at p. 1198), and has been recently re-published in the "Vita di N. Machiavelli" of Signor Amico. We reproduce it here :

"Spectabilis vir,

"Let this be the substance of the agreement. That the agreement be made for so many years, with a salary to be paid yearly, &c., binding and obliging the recipient to write the annals or history of the things done by the State and city of Florence, from whatever period he shall think fittest, and in either the Latin or Tuscan tongue, as may seem most convenient to him."

NICOLAUS MACHIAVELLI.

Honorando cognato, Francisco del Nero.

² The decision of the directors was published in the "Opere" (P. M.), p. lxxxix. We give it below, adding the memoranda of the first instalments paid to Machiavelli, and which are also recorded in the "Libro degli stipendiati per lo Studio, dal 1514 al 1521," preserved in the Florence Archives.

"Die viij. mensis novembrio M.D.XX. Conduxerunt Niccholaum de Machiavellis civem florentinum ad serviendum dicto eorum officio, et inter alia ad componendum annalia et cronacas florent. Et alia faciendum, que et prout dictis dominis officialibus fuerit expediens pro tempore et termino duorum annorum initiatorum die prima presentis mensis novembris, uno scilicet firmo, altero verum ad beneplacitum dictorum dominorum officialium cum salario quolibet anno florenorum centum, ad rationem librorum quatuor pro quolibet floreno solvendorum de quatuor mensibus in quatuor menses cum taxis obligationibus et aliis consuetis" (sheet 104).

"Die xij. junii M.D.XXJ." (sheet 144).

"Item infrascriptis eorum ministris servientibus tam Florentie quam Pisis, pro dictis quatuor mensibus initiatis et finitis ut supra" (initiat. die prima mensis novembris proxime preteriti) (at sheet 144'), (at sheet 145).

"Niccholao domini Bernardi de Machiavellis, fl. 33. 6. 8." (at sheet 145').

"Item infrascriptis eorum ministris ec. c. s., pro dictis quatuor mensibus

Machiavelli at once set to work, but was naturally obliged to devote some time to preparatory studies, further prolonged by various interruptions. And then, from a quarter whence it was least to be expected, he actually received advice to refuse the task entrusted to him, in favour of another offer of a very different nature. Piero Soderini, the ex-Gonfalonier, after having written to him from Ragusa¹ to make suggestions which seem to have been rejected, ceased all communication with him on his return to Rome, nor do we find further records of any continued correspondence between them. On the contrary, we have seen what numerous precautions were employed by both, for the purpose of averting dangerous suspicions. Suddenly, however, Soderini broke the long silence, by writing to him from Rome on the 13th of April, 1521: "Since the proposal I sent you from Ragusa did not suit you, I have taken the opportunity of suggesting your name to Prospero Colonna, who is in search of a secretary, and he has instantly accepted you, knowing that you are to be depended upon. The remuneration will consist of two hundred gold ducats and all your expenses. If this content you, set out at once, and without conferring with any one, so that your departure hence may not be known until your arrival there. It would be impossible to find you anything better than this, and it seems to me decidedly preferable to remaining where you are, and writing histories at so many *sealed* florins a piece."² What could have caused this sudden *initiatu* ut supra (*die prima mensis martii prox. preteriti* (at sheet 145^r), (at sheet 146^r).

"Niccholao ec, c. s."

After this time the Studio, with some of its records, was transferred to Pisa, only a few professorial chairs being retained in Florence. The "Libri dello Studio" for the years 1521-25 are wanting in the Pisan Archives; but in an account book there for the year 1526, at sheet 24^r, we find these entries: "Ad li ministri ('dello Studio fiorentino e del 'pisano):" "A Francesco del Nero fior. ottanta quattro di suggello, 84."

"A Niccolò Machiavelli fiorini centosettantacinque di suggello, 175."

The succeeding registers down to 1544 are missing. For the above entries, proving that the subsidy was continued for several years, we are indebted to Signor Tanfani Centofanti of the Pisan Archives.

¹ This letter, which is written in an almost unintelligible jargon, is No. xli. in the "Opere," vol. viii. p. 147. It was transcribed by Ricci from the annotated but very obscure original. He does not state whether it was an autograph, and does not inform us who was the author of the marginal notes copied by him into the codex from which we have given many quotations. These notes, however, by no means lessen the obscurity of Soderini's letter.

² This letter is in the "Opere" (P. M.), vol. i. p. lxxxix. The original is in the "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. No. 40.

revival of interest and unsolicited kindness, this strange contempt for an engagement to pen histories, with a subsidy from the Florentine Studio, at a time when all Italian writers accepted the aid of wealthy patrons, and it was deemed an enviable honour to be the official historian of any State whether great or small? The explanation may easily be guessed. The Soderini, aided by the French, were, as we shall soon find, actually engaged in a plot against the Medici, and even the ex-Gonfalonier had laid aside his prolonged neutrality in order to take part in it. Hence it was natural that he should be very ill-pleased to discover that his former secretary was, at this moment, gaining favour with the Medici, and natural that he should show all this eagerness to remove him from Florence. Prospero Colonna was in the service of the Spaniards, the enemies of the French; accordingly, were it even discovered from whom Machiavelli had received this proposal, its author would be in no way compromised, although secrecy was preferred, and therefore strongly recommended.

But it was totally impossible for Machiavelli to accept so unexpected an offer, and at the very moment when his position in Florence was really on the point of improvement. Barely quit of the old persecutions and suspicions, he ran the risk of having his property confiscated were he to leave the city suddenly, against the will of the Medici, and at the suggestion of their foes. For the Soderini were already declared enemies, although not yet known to be conspirators. Therefore Machiavelli not only continued his labours on the "Histories," but also accepted another temporary commission entrusted to him by the Cardinal in a letter of the 11th of May, 1521, signed by Niccolò Michelozzi, secretary of the Eight *di Pratica*. This obliged him to go to Carpi, where the full chapter of the Frati Minori was then sitting, to request, in the name of the Signory and the Cardinal, the separation of the Frati Minori established in the Florentine territory from the other brethren of that order in Tuscany, so that they might be subject to stricter superintendence and correction, for the advancement of religion and decorum, which were both on the decline in those communities.¹ And to add to the singularity of this commission, a very strange one to be assigned to Machiavelli, he had barely arrived at Carpi when he received another epistle, dated the 14th of May, by which the Consuls of the Woollen Guild, having the charge of Santa Maria del Fiore, begged him to obtain permission

¹ "Opere," vol. vii. pp. 439-41.

from the Superior of the Order for the coming to Florence of a certain Frà Rovaio, whom they had invited to preach in the cathedral the following Lent.¹ Machiavelli seems to have taken the matter very lightly, and paid little or no attention to it, especially as Frà Rovaio himself showed no desire to preach in Florence. As to the decree of separation, although he urged it strongly, even in the Cardinal's name, upon the Minister-general and the assessors of the chapter, and the request was backed by two favourable briefs from the Pope, the friars quibbled over the sense of the words, and declared that the matter must be brought before the General Assembly. Whereupon, weary of an affair that, in his hands, seemed to assume a ridiculous aspect, he suddenly took his departure. On the road he halted for a few days at Modena, partly by the Cardinal's desire, in order to visit Guicciardini, then papal governor of that city, and partly also because hasty riding was hurtful to him, as he was threatened with an attack of the stone.²

The sole importance of this mission consists in the correspondence exchanged during its course, between Machiavelli at Carpi and Guicciardini at Modena. They joked each other on the affair of the preacher and the monks, and Machiavelli, annoyed at being compelled to waste his time, vented his biting spirit of satire in the liveliest style. Guicciardini wrote on the 17th of May, wishing him all success in the affair of the preacher and that he might satisfy the expectations of the Consuls of the Woollen Guild, "and in a way befitting your honour, which would certainly be tarnished, if at your age you gave yourself to devotion (*all'anima*),³ for as you have always professed contrary opinions, it will be supposed that you have become imbecile rather than good."

He hoped that his friend would make haste, since he ran two dangers by remaining there: "first *that you may catch hypocrisy from those monks*, secondly that the Carpi air may turn you into

¹ "Opere" (P. M.), vol. vi. pp. 215, 216.

² *Vide* Machiavelli's letter to Cardinal dei Medici, in the "Opere," vol. vii. pp. 445-449.

³ The words in italics are missing from every edition of the "Opere," and are indicated by dots. There is a note to the effect that the original manuscript must have fallen into the hands of some pious person, who erased from this and the following letter all the more licentious words and those most disrespectful to religion. But they are intact in the copy contained in the Ricci Codex, from which we have taken them.

a liar, since such is its usual effect, not only in this age but for many centuries past." ¹

Machiavelli replied to him the same day in an equally ironical strain. His time was wasted in waiting for the monks to elect the general and assessors. Therefore he begged Guicciardini, when taking a drive, to push as far as Carpi to pay him a visit, or at least send a second runner on with a letter, since the monks would hold him in much higher consideration if they saw frequent messengers come to him. ² "For I can tell you that at the sight of your crossbowman carrying the letter and bowing down to the ground and saying that he had been sent expressly and in haste, every one rose with so many reverences and so much noise that all was in a turmoil and many came to me to ask the news. And I, in order to swell my importance, replied: that the Emperor was expected at Trent, and that the Swiss had summoned new Diets, and that the King of France wished to seek an interview with the former sovereign; although these advisers of his dissuaded him from the journey. So all stood open-mouthed and cap in hand; and as I write this I have a circle around me, who seeing me write at so much length are vastly astonished and gaze on me as on one possessed; and I, to increase their astonishment, sometimes stop my pen and puff out my cheeks, and thereupon they foam at the mouth, and if they only knew what I was saying to you they would marvel still more."

Regarding the mendacity of the men of Carpi, and the hypocrisy of the monks, Machiavelli, with an irony that was positively cynical, replied that he had no fear of those things, since he was long past master in them, so that even when speaking the truth he enveloped it in falsehood. ³ And then

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. pp. 155, 156.

² Guicciardini really despatched a second courier, with a letter of the 18th of May, 1521, that is among the "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. No. 111. *Vide* Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document x.

³ "Opere," vol. viii. pp. 156-169, letter lxix. Subjoined are the words that were suppressed in the printed versions, and in the same order as the breaks that are indicated by dots in this letter:

*predicatore ;
insegnasse la via
d'andare in casa il diavolo ;
pazzo che il Ponzo, più versato che
frà Girolamo, più ipocrito che
frate Alberto ;
tristo ;*

*preacher ;
should teach the way
to go to the devil ;
as mad as Ponzo, wiler than
Frà Girolamo, more hypocritical
than Frà Alberto ;
rascally ;*

followed a few more letters in the same vein. Guicciardini, in a moment of comparative gravity, wrote that Machiavelli's present condition reminded him of that of Lysander, obliged to distribute rations of meat to the very men he had led to victory.¹ He thought it deplorable that a man formerly employed on missions to so many kings and emperors should now be compelled to "play the lick-spittle to the sandalled Republic." He congratulated him on being commissioned to write the "Histories," said that he was "*ut plurimum*, of more extravagant opinions than the generality, and an inventor of new and out-of-the-way things." He then resumed his jests.² Machiavelli replied in the same mirthful tone, and wound up by saying that, at least, he had been treated to excellent repasts and was quite filled out. And thus ended a mission that Guicciardini justly designated as a farce. It could not go on any longer, for the monks were beginning to discern that Machiavelli was making fun of them.

Having returned to Florence, he applied himself to his history and other literary undertakings; but shortly after occurred the death of Leo X., and the many changes caused by that event. Hostilities were suspended, for want of the Papal supplies, which had chiefly served to carry them on; the Spaniards were obliged to dismiss the German infantry and nearly all the Swiss. This was the signal for the uprisal of those who had long been trodden under foot. Francesco Maria della Rovere recovered Urbino, Pesaro, Montefeltro, and even St. Leo, which had already been given to the Florentines, although all that now remained to them was the district of Sestino. Sigismondo Varano, the former lord of Camerino, re-entered his State, and expelled his uncle, Giammaria, who had been installed in it by Leo X. Alfonso d'Este

*mantello della religione ;
pestando i fanghi di S. Francesco ;
scandalo ;
alle zoccolate ;
questi frati dicono che quando uno è
confermato in grazia, il diavolo non ha
più potenza di tentarlo. Così io non
ho paura che questi frati mi appichino
la ipocrisia, perchè io credo essere assai
ben confermato ;
né credo mai quel che io dico ; frà tante
bugie ;*

*cloak of religion ;
treading the mud of St. Francis ;
scandal ;
with sandal-kicks.
these friars declare that when one is
well confirmed in grace, the devil has
no more power to tempt him. Accord-
ingly I am not afraid of catching hypo-
crisy of these monks, since I hold myself
to be very well confirmed ;
nor do I ever believe that which I say ;
among so many lies ;*

¹ He alludes to the account given by Plutarch in his "Life of Lysander."

² Letter of the 18th of May, 1521, "Opere," vol. viii. pp. 159-161.

recovered nearly all his dominions, but could not regain Modena and Reggio; and Parma, defended by its governor, Francesco Guicciardini, in the interests of the Papacy, repulsed an attack upon its walls. Later, Malatesta and Orazio Baglioni both returned to Perugia. Meanwhile, the Conclave had arrived at no decision after a fortnight's session. Cardinal Wolsey, Cardinal dei Medici, Cardinal Soderini, and others were candidates for the Papal See. Matters dragged on so slowly that Medici, perceiving that his own hour had not yet struck, and that even his power in Florence was endangered by his lengthened absence, proposed a foreign candidate, who was far away and almost unknown. The proposal was accepted, and Adrian Dedel, a native of Utrecht, Cardinal of Tortosa, and former preceptor of Charles V., was duly elected under the name of Adrian VI.

So great was the indignation of the people at the election of this foreign Pope, that many wrote over their doors: *Roma est locanda*. And the discontent became general when Adrian was personally known. Born on the 2nd of March, 1459, raised to the papacy on the 9th of January, 1522, he could not speak the language of the Italians, and pronounced Latin in a fashion that was almost unintelligible to them. Being a man of culture and of spotless life, he reduced the expenses of his Court to the lowest possible sum. But this measure only served to increase his unpopularity. His aim was to devote himself earnestly to religion and Church reform; to abjure festivities and drive away poets and artists; but no one heeded his exhortations. He found himself suddenly transplanted to an entirely unknown world, where no one understood him, no one loved him. Pasquin cut continual jokes at his expense, and instead of laughing at them as the Romans laughed, was so highly incensed by them, that one day he desired the statue to be cast into the Tiber. But the Duke of Sessa warned him that Pasquin would go on speaking all the same, since, like the frogs, he was quite capable of talking under water. All Romans, and especially the artists and *literati* who were now deprived of court patronage, were furious against the new Pope and his favourites, whose very names were unpronounceable.

"Ecco che personaggi, ecco che Corte,
Che brigate, galanti cortigiane,
Copis, Vincl, Corizio e Trincheforte,
Nomi da far sbigottire un cane."¹

¹ "Behold what personages, what a pretty court, what a gallant string of cour-

So wrote Berni in his Capitolo against the election of the new Pope, and the forty "*poltroon*" Cardinals who had voted for him, and whom the satirical poet overwhelmed with invectives. Accordingly Adrian VI. gained nothing but misery by his tiara, but fortunately had not to bear its burden long, since on the 14th of September, 1523, he drew his last breath. Thereupon there was great rejoicing in the Eternal City, and the door of the physician who had attended him,¹ was decorated with garlands, and the inscription: *Ob Urbem servatam*.

Meanwhile novelties of another sort were occurring in Florence. Cardinal dei Medici was a prudent ruler, and even in the opinion of patriots like Nardi, succeeded better than had been expected, and decidedly better than Giuliano and Lorenzo, who had bestowed little or no attention on the city. For the Cardinal was gentle-mannered, sharp witted and patient, sufficiently cautious in his habits to avoid scandal, fond of the city and anxious for its embellishment. He constructed a canal to prevent the overflow of the Arno, fortified the town walls, and without being a great Mæcenæ, gave his patronage to scholars and artists.² Nevertheless he had many and perilous enemies. There were the lovers of liberty in Florence, and the Soderini without, to whom he was now an object of the fiercest hatred. The latter had never forgiven the Medici their broken promise of a matrimonial alliance. Cardinal Soderini had been concerned in Petrucci's conspiracy against Leo X., and a very active rival of Cardinal dei Medici in the last Conclave. The same rivalry would be inevitable on the death of Adrian. For all these reasons the Soderini, who had first joined the French in order to combat Medici's election, now made a still firmer alliance against him, in order to oppose his government in Florence, where, being aided therein by the ex-Gonfalonier, they succeeded in winning numerous adherents.

The gravest discontent had arisen among the youths frequenting the meetings in the Oricellarii Gardens, although nearly all had been originally partisans of the Medici. As easily happened in those days, some had been alienated by purely personal reasons; tiers! Copis, Vinc, Corizio and Trincheforte! Names fitted to scare a dog!" Berni, "*Opere Burlesche*." London, 1723, vol. i. p. 77.

¹ Gregorovius, "*Geschichte*," vol. viii. p. 392 and fol.; De Leva, "*Storia di Carlo V.*," lib. ii. chap. iii.; Ranke, "*Die Römischen Päpste*," lib. i. chap. iii.; Reumont, "*Geschichte der Stadt Rom*," lib. viii. part ii.; Constantin Ritter von Höfler, "*Papst Adrian VI.*" (1522-23), Wien, Braumüller, 1880.

² Nardi, "*Storia*," vol. ii. pp. 73, 75.

others, such as Zanobi Buondelmonti, Luigi Alamanni and Jacopo da Diacceto, men of classical training, and animated by an ardent desire to accomplish something extraordinary that should make their names famous, had been gradually worked up to a pitch of exaltation by listening to the teachings of Machiavelli. The latter, who was now over fifty years of age, and certainly never thought of conspiracy, was not aware that his writings, and still more his spoken words, had produced on the minds of these youthful hearers any other than a merely literary or scientific effect. He continued to address them enthusiastically on the subject of the Roman Republic and Italy, of the nation in arms, of great men exalted to heaven on a level with the gods, for having sacrificed substance, life and soul to their country. And meanwhile certain of his hearers began to come to an understanding with the Soderini, and join in their plots, without breathing a syllable of it to him or to their other associates, many of whom were still friends of the Cardinal and frequently in his house. The Cardinal himself, either in good or ill faith, had also aided in inflaming the minds of these youths. Whether it was that he actually meditated carrying out the theory expounded to him by Machiavelli, and re-organizing the Republic in such a way that at his death it might become really independent; whether the speedy hope of attaining to the papal crown made him think of the time when Florence would be deprived of his presence, and with no legitimate heirs to succeed him; or whether—and this is quite probable—he sought to discover the names of the malcontents by fomenting their illusions, it is positive that he interrogated many on the manner of re-constituting and re-organizing the Republic, seemed to receive their replies with avidity and to study them with care. Then, to inspire all with additional faith in his words, he allowed himself to be continually seen pacing his own garden in the company of the poet Girolamo Benivieni, the ardent follower of Savonarola.¹

Thus it came about that new proposals of reform were presented to him by Zanobi Buondelmonti, Alessandro dei Pazzi and Niccolò Machiavelli. The first of these proposals no longer exists, but was seen and has been recorded by Nerli. That of Pazzi, which was afterwards published, suggested a perpetual Gonfalonier, a Grand Council and a Senate composed of life members, sitting in

¹ Nardi, "*Storia di Firenze*," vol. ii. pp. 74, 75.

rotation and holding the chief power in their hands.¹ And as was natural in a supporter of aristocratic government, Pazzi did not approve of the proposal already made to Leo X. by Machiavelli. But the latter now repeated it to the Cardinal, with certain modifications rendering it more explicit and giving it exactly the form of a decree.

"Our High and Magnificent Lords (Magnifici ed Eccelsi Signori), considering that there can be nothing more praiseworthy than the ordering of a united and free republic, in which all private interests yield to the common welfare, and the cravings of vain-glory are extinguished, being comforted and encouraged by our most Reverend Lord His Eminence Cardinal Giulio dei Medici, and invoking the name of the Almighty, do provide and decree," &c. Thus ran the first sentence of the proposed decree, re-confirming the Greater Council in the authority it held before 1512; providing for the election of a Gonfalonier every three years, annulling the Councils of the People, the Commune and the Hundred, and transforming the Council of Sixty into a senate or new Council of the Hundred, with the same powers held by the Eighty previous to 1512. Machiavelli also desired that the Signory in office should elect twelve citizens over forty-five years of age, in whom, together with the Cardinal, would be temporarily vested the whole authority of the Florentine people for the making of new laws and statutes. But in order that this measure might prove really beneficial to liberty, this Council extraordinary was only to last one year, without power of prorogation or renewal.²

At this time Machiavelli also composed another short pamphlet on the burgher militia, trying to prove that the sole way to obtain a good Ordinance was by re-constituting it on a larger scale, as in the time of Soderini, instead of reducing it to a handful of armed men, as had been done by the Medici, the which made it practically useless.³

¹ *Vide* the "Discorso" of Pazzi in the "Archivio Storico," vol. i. p. 420 and fol.

² This second project of reform, from Machiavelli's pen, was first brought out by A. d'Ancona in a pamphlet published on the occasion of the Cavaliere-Zabban marriage, 16th of October, 1872, and entitled: "Due Scritture di Niccolò Machiavelli." Pisa, Nistri, 1872. It was afterwards republished in Signor Amico's "Vita di N. Machiavelli," p. 550 and fol. The original is among the "Carte del Machiavelli," case i. No. 79.

³ This autograph composition is among the "Carte del Machiavelli," case i. No. 63. *Vide* Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xi. Signor Amico

There was great belief in the goodness of the Cardinal's intentions. Filippo dei Nerli, a frequenter of the Oricellarii Gardens, but always a firm adherent to the *Palle*, relates how divided the city was at that time, and how much men's minds were relieved by these new expectations. After telling us that, in consequence of this, several projects of reform were prepared, he adds: "Zanobi Buondelmonti and even Niccolò Machiavelli showed their minds very plainly in this way; for I saw their writings, and all went into the hands of the Cardinal, who pretended to value them very highly. Alessandro dei Pazzi wrote a very beautiful and elegant Latin oration, expressive of the people's gratitude to the Cardinal for the restoration of the Republic, and it was read with much applause, in the presence of many citizens at a supper." He goes on to say that matters were pushed so far that the Cardinal began to desire to check them, and no longer knew how to do so.¹ But although Jacopo Nardi spoke of the Cardinal's administration, in his "Histories," in very laudatory terms, he plainly accuses him of "deceit" on this occasion, and says that "he abused the good faith of certain, perhaps over-credulous, citizens, who were all the more easily tricked by seeing that he gave no ear to the complaints and remonstrances of trusty adherents, by whom he was warned that he was playing a dangerous game." The Cardinal's real intentions only began to be apparent when Pazzi presented him with the oration in praise of the restoration of liberty. For he replied that he was too much occupied at that moment to have time to read it; that it had better be consigned to Niccolò della Magna. And this individual, the German Niccolò Schomberg, who was in the Cardinal's secrets, coldly remarked after reading it: "I am truly pleased with your oration, but cannot approve of its theme."²

Then it was clearly seen that the very reverend Monsignore had

gave a fragment of it at p. 269 of his "Vita di N. Machiavelli." He considers it to be the rough sketch of a letter written to Cardinal Soderini when the Ordinance was first established. But an attentive perusal shows it to be no letter, but a proposal addressed to the Cardinal in order to re-establish the Ordinance for the second time.

¹ Filippo dei Nerli, "Commentarii," pp. 137, 138.

² Nardi, vol. ii. pp. 83, 84. Also Jacopo Pitti gives a full account of all this affair in his "Storia Fiorentina," lib. ii. p. 122. ("Archivio Storico," vol. i.) He says that the decree for the reformed government was drawn up, and at p. 124 he epitomizes it, giving a summary of the very *provisione* that Machiavelli had written, thus proving that the latter had prepared it by the Cardinal's authorization.

made a fine use of his craft, and deceived ingenuous minds, without however entrapping those of keener wits. In fact, at the last Conclave, he had realized that the hatred of the Soderini was inextinguishable, that they were engaged in some plot, conjointly with the French and some of his own personal enemies in Florence, and, as we have seen, this had forced him to hasten his return. He certainly could not be ignorant that Battista della Palla, having been refused certain favours he sought to obtain, was no longer a friend but a foe of the Medici, and also was now tarrying in Rome to confer with the Soderini and carrying on an active correspondence with Florence. But it was neither easy to discover to whom he wrote nor what he was scheming.

After the death of Leo X., Malatesta and Orazio Baglioni, accompanied by the Duke of Urbino, had entered the Siennese territory, in order to attempt the overthrow of the government. They had been urged to this enterprise by Cardinal Soderini, who, being an enemy of Petrucci, the Medicean governor of that city, hoped, by this preliminary step, to facilitate the expulsion of the Medici from Florence. Cardinal Giulio defeated this enterprise by means of his Swiss and German mercenaries; and afterwards succeeded in engaging the Baglioni themselves and the Duke of Urbino in his service. But before long another expedition was made against Sienna, also at the instigation of Cardinal Soderini, by Lorenzo Orsini of the Roman Campagna, nicknamed Renzo da Ceri, who marched thither at the head of his vassals. And a small band of French soldiery set out from Genoa for the same purpose. But this second attempt likewise was quickly repressed, for the Cardinal had been careful to hire an adequate force of foot soldiers and men-at-arms. The French were recalled on account of the bad turn their affairs were taking in Lombardy, and the Conclave which, pending the arrival of Adrian, still exercised authority in Rome, showed itself hostile to the enterprise. Thereupon Renzo da Ceri lost courage to proceed and retraced his steps.¹

These facts furnished abundant proofs that the Medici counted many adversaries both within and without the walls of Florence; adversaries, too, of abundant courage and resource. It was to discover the names of these enemies that the Cardinal continued to promote still livelier discussions on the reconstitution of the Republic. This measure was neither wanting in sagacity, nor

¹ Nardi, "*Storia*," vol. ii. p. 85; Capponi, "*Storia della Repubblica di Firenze*," vol. ii. p. 336; Pitti, "*Storia Fiorentina*," p. 125.

altogether unsuccessful. For the poet Luigi Alamanni, Zanobi Buondelmonti, Jacopo da Diacceto and other youths of the Oricellarii Gardens, were banded with Soderini in a plot against his life. Battista della Palla was their agent in Rome, and they only awaited the success of Renzo da Ceri's expedition to unsheath their daggers. And when this hope failed them, the better to avoid detection, they were louder than others in their acclamations of the generosity shown by the Cardinal in promising to give Florence a republic. In this way they not only hoped to save their lives, but to achieve freedom, without running the risk of a conspiracy that had no longer any chance of success.¹ But as many others expressed the same opinions with entire sincerity, it was not yet possible for the Cardinal to distinguish his friends from his enemies.

Chance, however, came to his aid. A courier was captured just at this time who had carried despatches and intelligence between Battista della Palla and the conspirators in Florence. When this man confessed to having spoken with Jacopo da Diacceto, the latter was instantly cast into prison. The poet, Luigi Alamanni, who had taken a prominent part in the conspiracy, happened to be in the country and was warned in time. So hurried was his flight, that he forgot to give the alarm to his cousin Luigi di Tommaso Alamanni, also in the plot, and who was seized in Arezzo, where he was then staying. Zanobi Buondelmonti first learnt that all was discovered while strolling through the city with Filippo dei Nerli. He ran to his own house to hide, but his wife gave him what money she had, and persuaded him to fly. Accordingly, he first fled to the Garfagnana, where his friend Lodovico Ariosto was then governor; and afterwards, in company with Alamanni, sought refuge in France. Summary justice meanwhile was being dealt in Florence. Jacopo da Diacceto, on

¹ "But when Signor Renzo's attempt did not succeed as was expected by the conspirators, who were waiting to execute their design until that enterprise should have some happy result, but on the contrary failed, then Zanobi and Luigi found themselves implicated in the plot without being able to carry it out; and fearing lest it should be discovered through their having talked of it too freely, were therefore foremost among those who urgently solicited the Cardinal dei Medici to carry out the designs related above and all the vain speeches that were going round as to the new government reforms, inasmuch as it seemed to them that if this could be achieved, they would be secured against all danger from the discovery of their plot, which could be ill carried into effect now that the Cardinal dei Medici had contrived to parry the attack of Signor Renzo in the way that we have seen" (Nerli, "*Commentarii*," p. 138).

being put to the torture, unhesitatingly confessed : " I wish to rid myself of this pumpkin of a body : we intended to kill the Cardinal." And he added that they had decided to do so from no hatred towards him, but for love of liberty, and because they knew that he lied when promising them reforms.¹ The trial ended, Diacceto and Luigi di Tommaso Alamanni were both beheaded before daybreak on the 7th of June, 1522. Fresh investigations and decrees of punishment then followed. Nearly all the Soderini were proclaimed rebels ; the ex-Gonfalonier was cited before the tribunal, but as he died on the 13th of June, his property was confiscated, and his memory sentenced to damnation.² Some other individuals were also taken and tried, but without anything further being discovered, since the only real culprits were already dead or in exile. Cardinal Soderini did not desist from plotting with the French against the Spaniards ; but Adrian VI., who already, if with much moderation, openly favoured the latter, soon put an end to this by imprisoning him in the Castle of St. Angelo. Thus tranquillity was re-established even in Florence, and nothing more was heard of the promised restoration of liberty.

This plot, and its sanguinary repression, naturally dispersed the society of the Orti Oricellarii. By great good luck no suspicion fell upon Machiavelli, although some blame attached to him for the discourses by which, even if involuntarily, he had inflamed the minds of the younger and more impetuous of his hearers. Nevertheless, Cardinal dei Medici did not deprive him of his favour, but his speedy election to the pontificate left the government of Florence, as we shall see, in the clumsy grasp of the Cardinal of Cortona, who ruled the city in the Pope's name with less judgment and greater obduracy. All these reasons combined to call Machiavelli back to a quieter life in his country home. It was there that he worked at his "Histories" and completed various other literary works, among which his comedies occupy the first rank. Of these latter it now behoves us to speak.

¹ Nardi, "Storia," vol. ii. p. 89.

² *Et mortuus non posset damnari*, so runs the sentence. Vide the documents relating to this conspiracy, published in the "Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani," vol. iii. p. 123 and fol. Florence, Vieusseux. The sentence relating to Piero Soderini is at pp. 133, 134. He died and was buried in Rome. In the choir of the Carmine church in Florence, which was built by his family, there is a monument by Benedetto da Rovezzano, which it is said was intended by Soderini for his own sepulchre.



CHAPTER X.

General condition of the Italian stage—The miracle plays ("Sacre Rappresentazioni")—The "Comedy of Art" and the "Comedy of Learning"—The comedies of Ariosto—The "Calandria" of Cardinal Bibbiena—The comedies of Machiavelli—The "Mandragola," the "Clizia," the "Comedy in Prose," the "Comedy in Verse," the translation of the "Andria."



As all know, Italy has possessed more than one comic writer and several tragic poets of the highest merit, but has had nothing truly deserving the name of a national stage. During the period when the Romans might have derived original and national comedy from their ancient popular farces and comic and satiric performances, the Mimes and the Atellanæ, they gave their powers to imitations of Greek plays from which neither the genius of Terence nor Plautus availed to emancipate them. Thus a literary theatre arose, having no popular foundation, and the people therefore continued to prefer the Mimes and Atellanæ. These old-world farces, although gradually changing, were still in existence in the Middle Ages, when, being fused into and grafted upon the Miracle Plays, they finally introduced a lay element into the latter and withdrew them from church and cloister. Later they gave birth to the so-called "Commedia dell'Arte," which became increasingly popular, and was already very general among us during the Renaissance. This was almost entirely improvised by the actors who were furnished with nothing but the *scenario*, or subject, general plot, and skeleton framework of the different scenes, indicating the character of the part to be played by each personage, and the salient points of the

principal dialogues. The masks (or conventional personages) of this "*Commedia dell' Arte*," Pantaloon, Harlequin, Punch and Brighella, are probably slowly transformed survivals of the characters of the Mimes and Atellanæ.

Then, during the Renaissance there came about something very similar to that which had formerly taken place in Rome. Both from the "*Sacre Rappresentazioni*" already attaining to a notable literary development, and from the already flourishing "*Commedia dell' Arte*," a national drama and comedy might easily have been derived, had not men reverted instead to imitations of the tragedy and comedy of the ancient world. In an age when scepticism invaded every mind, when all political institutions were in process of dissolution, when the nation was incapable of reconstituting itself, and the torrent of foreign invasion setting in, genuine epic inspiration and truly tragic feeling were alike impossible. The "*Sofonisba*" of Trissino and the "*Rosmunda*" of Rucellai were the best tragedies of the period; but although of considerable merit, containing some genuinely lyrical bursts, and occasional flashes of dramatic power, they adhered too closely to the pattern of the ancients, had no real life of their own, and never led to other and better works.

But as, public disasters notwithstanding, there was even too much mirth in Italy at that time, comedy fared better than tragedy, although likewise clad in borrowed plumes chiefly plucked from Terence and Plautus. This, the so-called comedy of learning, was widely diffused among literary court circles, and wore an increasing resemblance to the "*Commedia dell' Arte*." Yet it preserved a physiognomy of its own, and while conferring no little improvement and correction upon the "*Comedy of Art*," gained from it in exchange a sensible increase of liveliness and spontaneity. Nevertheless the learned comedy was always the production of *litterati* and a work of imitation, and so the people continued to prefer the "*Comedy of Art*," which never entirely lost its primitive stamp even when beginning to be somewhat artificial.

There has been much discussion as to the causes precluding the Italy of the Renaissance from founding a genuine national theatre or at least a national comedy at a time when there was so great an abundance of the requisite materials. Certainly the "*Commedia dell' Arte*" showed no lack of vivacity or fertility of invention, and the "*Commedia Erudita*" was also replete with an

inexhaustible wealth of the same comic spirit abounding in almost every Italian tale and in much of the poetry of the period. On the other hand, many branches of our literature were imitative in the beginning, and then, owing to their intrinsic vigour and vitality, rose to independence and achieved a genuine national originality of their own. How was it then that our theatre failed to reach the same goal? The truth may be that there is no reason why a nation successful in many things should be equally fortunate in all. To form a national theatre it is requisite for the social and national life to be already formed and developed; and Italy was not yet moulded into a nation when the tide of foreign invasion swept everything aside, suffocated liberty and hastened the general decadence. Besides, the formation of a theatre demands the liberal participation of the public; almost, indeed, the co-operation of the masses, who in this, as in many other branches of composition, prepare the poetic material into which great writers infuse new life. And it should also be remembered that the original, vigorous, and complete development of popular poetry was frequently hindered in Italy by the continual and incessant action that, owing to the slight division of social classes, was exercised by literary upon popular art.

For in this country, before any one species of popular composition attains sufficient maturity to give birth to a new form of national poetry, it already begins to decay and yields the soil to the *literati* pressing forward to cultivate it. The latter know how to profit by every popular element; indeed it has been mainly by aid of this sort that classic imitation in Italy has frequently risen to the height of a genuine renaissance. But exactly at the point where the popular element should of right prevail, owing to the need for the origination of a new and national poetic stock, our literature has still greater obstacles to encounter. Nor is it surprising that it should be unable to overcome them when—as was certainly the case with our stage in the sixteenth century—the political conditions of the land are equally hostile.

Such were the reasons why, during the Italian Renaissance, the Sacred Drama became charged with classical reminiscences, literary and conventional forms, before reaching its plenitude of popular vitality; namely, before it could furnish great writers with material for new creations. The "Comedy of Art" had also been polished, modified and altered after the pattern of the "Comedy of Learning." And the latter, without entirely foregoing imitation of Plautus and

Terence, was continually straining after the popular element. More than once it seemed on the point of success ; an original national comedy appeared to be at last arising ; but then imitation quickly regained the upper hand and either the artificial or the plebeian element again prevailed. Thus we never obtained any grasp of the genuine comedy of Aristophanes or Molière.

Being an easy writer, Terence was enormously copied in Italy ; but the influence exercised by Plautus on our stage was by no means slight. Although much rougher, the latter is decidedly superior as a comic writer. With the psychologic insight of an experienced judge of human nature, his representation of character, the power and variety with which he reproduces the countless aspects of town life, and above all his manifest genius for displaying the weaker sides of men's actions and characters, with a daring superiority that turns all things to ridicule, are the distinguishing qualities which made him so popular in Italy. As Mommsen observes, Plautus pulls the strings of his comic plot with great judgment and biting wit ; his standpoint is the tavern, which in his plays is always seen to be in antagonism with the home. Terence, on the contrary, plants himself in the house-place, among good people of the better classes ; he studies truth to nature, even at the risk of tediousness ; he is of a calm and tranquil disposition, and his comedies show a higher conception of woman and of the married state. Plautus paints his characters with broad strokes of the brush ; while the psychologic analysis of Terence is a genuine miniature. In the former's plays sons are continually turning their fathers into ridicule, and his dialogue is full of quips and conceits ; those of the latter have almost educational aims, and his smooth and ornate style has subtlety and elegance of movement. His weak side is that of invention, but he supplies the lack of it by art.

Our learned men speedily began to produce both in Italian and Latin, imitations, translations, and paraphrases, of these two comic writers. In Rome, Pomponius Letus was one of the first to give performances of ancient plays by the members of his Roman Academy. The Academy of the *Rozzi* in Sienna quickly followed his lead, and its example was everywhere taken by a great many other associations, such as the *Infiammati*, *Infocati*, *Intronati*, *Immobili*, *Costanti*, &c. But this movement received its first impulse from, and was chiefly centred in Ferrara, under the patronage of the Duke of that State. It was at Ferrara that a

translation of the "*Menæchmi*" of Plautus was performed in public as early as the year 1486. And just as at Ferrara our romantic poetry first assumed its true shape by the fusion of old French romance with learning; so the grafting of Plautus and Terence upon national and popular elements in the same city gave birth to the new comedy initiated by Lodovico Ariosto, before he earned lasting fame by his "*Orlando Furioso*."

The manner in which this poet successively composed his five comedies is an epitome of the history of the Italian comic stage. He began by translations from the Latin which are no longer extant, and then applied himself to original plays. His "*Cassaria*," written in 1498, bristles with imitations from Terence; his next work, "*I Suppositi*," was founded upon the "*Captives*" and the "*Eunuch*" fused into one. And the author declares in his prologue that "not only in the fashioning, but even in the arguments of his fables, it is his purpose to imitate the celebrated ancient poets to the utmost extent of his ability." Nevertheless he places the action of the "*Suppositi*" in Ferrara, at the time of the capture of Otranto by the Turks; makes frequent allusion to contemporary matters, and gives his dialogue an independent vitality of its own. These two comedies, originally written in prose, were afterwards versified by the author. His other plays were also in verse; for in verse Ariosto had a style of his own, simple, natural and original, and naturally felt more at home in his proper element. Nevertheless, this withdrew him from the path marked out for Italian comedy, which was nearly always in prose, on account of the necessary reproduction of familiar dialogue. In his "*Lena*" both subject and characters are of the sixteenth century. Most original of the five are the two last, the "*Negromante*" and the "*Scolastica*." In these we are among the students of Ferrara and Padova, and in the thick of their love affairs. The corruption of Italian society is shown to us unveiled, and the author's satire scourges the manners of the time: the men who paint their faces like women, the needy struggling to appear rich, the rulers of the land with their wolf-like rapacity, the priests that cause scandal of all kinds, and the Popes that traffic in indulgences.

In this way the comedy of learning freed itself from the shackles of the academicians, acquired independence and truth to nature, and came into closer contact with the social life of its time. It was animated by the biting and satiric spirit, the huge simplicity

and sensuousness so peculiarly characteristic of the Italian literature of the "Cinquecento," and fostered by study and imitation of Plautus. The comedies of the Renaissance depend almost wholly on their plots, and are often composed by the intermixture of several ancient plays, usually character-pieces. The most admirable quality of Ariosto's plays consists in his vivid portraiture of the times, and his satiric treatment of them. For his satire is little more than a gentle irony, by which he, who is himself an integrant of the age he describes, enjoys his laugh at all things. In these plays we can discern the genius of a great poet, the inaugurator of a new style of composition; but we also realize that he is destined, and already girding himself for a different and greater labour. For notwithstanding the marvellous spontaneity and simplicity of his verse, the private and domestic character of Italian comedy can only assume its true shape in the freedom of prose dialogue. Besides, that which chiefly attracts Ariosto's attention and impresses his imagination, that which he places most clearly before us, is the plot, the continual succession of events, the outer presentment of his personages. He has neither the desire nor the ability to dedicate much time to the analysis of character or passion. A great variety of episodes, often without any unity, or only such as is derived from perpetual change; a throng of personages, all life-like while present, but disappearing without enacting anything of importance, all this warns us that these plays were preparatory studies for the immortal genius of the creator of "*Orlando Furioso*." It would seem as though the mighty poem were already stirring in his fancy, already throbbing with vigorous young life and impatient to emerge into the light. It might be said to have granted the poet no peace, to have hurried him onward, and altered the character of the work that he had still on hand.

The "*Calandria*" of Cardinal Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena, composed in the first decade of the sixteenth century, made a great sensation in the world. It was held by many to have initiated the new style of Italian comedy; but this is not the case, for the "*Calandria*" had been already preceded by several of Ariosto's comedies, and was decidedly inferior to them. Bibbiena, however, was a Cardinal, a Tuscan, and very facetious; he was no poet, but tried to write in a familiar style to catch the public ear, and succeeded in his intent. People, Pope, cardinals, the weightiest personages of his time alike welcomed his play



CARDINAL BIBBIENA.
(After the portrait at the Pitti Palace)

with laughter and applause. It had a positively enormous success. The author states in the prologue that he does not use verse, "because comedy represents familiar deeds and speech, and because prose can be spoken with free and unfettered words." He also begs his hearers to excuse him if the comedy is not ancient, inasmuch as modern things give greater pleasure; he also excuses himself for not having written it in Latin, on the score that he desires to be understood by all, and the tongue that God and Nature have given us is worthy of no less esteem than Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.¹

All this proves the magnitude of the change that had now come over the public taste. Yet the "Calandria" is taken from the "Menæchmi" of Plautus, with the sole difference that the male twins, exactly resembling each other, are replaced by a brother and sister who are also twins, and so precisely alike that on changing clothes, each is easily mistaken for the other. This resemblance, and the foolishness of Calandro, who falls in love with the youth in the belief that he is the girl, serve to create a thousand farcical, comical, and very indecent blunders, marvellously suited to the taste of the time. The fact of its being written by a Cardinal increased its effect; and both the Pope and the Sacred College received it with laughter and applause. But there is nothing new or modern about the "Calandria" excepting its outline, and the vivacity and spontaneousness of the Tuscan dialogue, which, however, is occasionally too diffuse and monotonous. The play hinges almost entirely upon tricks which are ludicrous and obscene rather than really comic. The personages are shadowy, and the incidents never rise to true dramatic or comic power, because everything turns upon the excessive imbecility of Calandro, who can be made to believe anything. In short, it is little more than a farce stuffed with gross and obscene jests. The great vogue it obtained may chiefly be ascribed to the manner in which it was placed upon the stage; and it is easy to understand that the clever actors engaged in its performance were able to make a sixteenth-century audience crack their jaws with laughter over it. The "Calandria" marks the moment when, by treading on the heels of the comedy of art, the comedy of learning and plagiarism had discovered its suitable form in prose dialogue. It is this that gives Cardinal

¹ *Vide* the prologue of the "Calandria" in the "Teatro Italiano antico," vol. i. pp. 195-197. Milan, Printing Association of the Italian Classics.

Bibbiena's work a post of historic importance in our literature.¹

But the writer who, next to Ariosto, deserves the place of honour for having endowed Italian comedy with its true form, is undoubtedly Machiavelli, whose "*Mandragola*" surpassed all preceding plays. We have already seen by his writings, and especially by his private correspondence, that he was possessed of great comic and satiric power; that he had a strong bent for dramatic composition was also proved as early as 1504, by his attempt to imitate the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, in the "*Maschere*," a work that has now perished, and in which he applied the lash to his contemporaries. But all this was not enough to lead any one to suppose him capable of giving us the "*Mandragola*," which is the finest comedy of the Italian stage; and one that, according to Macaulay, is superior to the best of Goldoni's plays, and only inferior to the greatest of Molière's.

The action of the "*Mandragola*," apparently suggested by an incident that occurred in Florence, is placed in the year 1504.² But the prologue clearly indicates that the play was composed at

¹ Besides the best-known histories of Italian literature, see A. D'Ancona's "*Origini del Teatro in Italia*," 3 vols. Florence, Le Monnier, 1872. Herr Ruth's "*Geschichte der Italienischen Poesie*" (Leipzig, 1847, 2 vols.) is a work of real merit and worthy of perusal, for if seldom quoted, it has often been pillaged. Prof. Karl Hillebrand is one of the few writers who have done justice to this work, and mentions it in his "*Etudes historiques et littéraires*" (Paris, Franck, 1868), in which he gives a masterly account of the Italian stage. See, too, the diligent work, entitled "*L'imitazione classica nella Commedia Italiana del secolo XVI.*" It is a prize essay, by Dr. Vincenzo de Amicis, published in the "*Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*," vol. ii. Pisa, Nistri, 1873. And several years later appeared the "*Studii Drammatici*" of Prof. Arturo Graf (Turin, Loescher, 1878). These consist of three essays: on the "*Calandria*" of Bibbiena, the "*Mandragola*" of Machiavelli, and the "*Candelaio*" of Giordano Bruno. Much information is also to be found in Klein's great work: "*Geschichte des Dramas*," which in vol. iv. (Leipzig, 1866) begins to treat of the Italian stage. But this work is so diffuse and confused, and (putting aside its often extraordinary style) mingles valuable information with so much that is heterogeneous and useless, that it is extremely difficult to gain much assistance from it. Prof. Graf has made good use both of Klein and of Ruth, just as Prof. de Amicis has made very great use of Ruth. And in conclusion, we may quote the two concluding volumes of Mr. J. A. Symonds' excellent work, "*The Renaissance in Italy*."

² In the first scene Callimaco states that he has lived twenty years in Paris, and that at the end of half of that period occurred the entry of Charles VIII. into Italy. As this event took place in 1494, ten years more brings us to the year 1504.

a much later date, certainly after 1512, and during the dreariest period of Machiavelli's life. Giovio tells us, in his "Elogia doctorum virorum," that Leo X. on hearing of the great success of the "Mandragola" in Florence had it performed in Rome by the same actors.¹ And from a letter of Battista della Palla, dated 26th of April, 1520, we see that all was then in readiness for this performance before the Pope.² Therefore the comedy had been already played in Florence previously to this date. The oldest printed edition, of which, according to bibliographers, the date is exactly ascertained, must have been published in Rome in the August of 1524;³ but it seems undoubted that there are other and still older editions without any date. But there is no evidence that the rumoured performance of Machiavelli's "Mandragola," in the presence of Leo X. at the Oricellarii Gardens, ever took place, and indeed it seems incredible. It was probably confused with the "Rosmunda" of Rucellai.

To us the "Mandragola" has a double importance, for on the one hand it makes us acquainted with Machiavelli's comic power in its highest splendour and originality, and on the other shows

¹ . . . "in Nicia praesertim comoedia, in qua adeo incunde vel in tristibus risum excitavit, ut illi ipsi ex persona scite expressa, in scaenam inducti cives, quanquam praealte commorderentur, totam inustae notae iniuriam, civili lenitate pertulerint: actamque Florentiae, ex ea miri leporis fama, Leo pontifex, instaurato ludo, ut Urbi ea voluptas communicaretur, cum toto scenae cultu, ipsisque histrionibus Romam acciverit" ("Elogia doctorum virorum," authore Paulo Jovio, lxxvii. Nicolaus Macciavellus).

² This letter is among the Machiavelli papers, and was published in the "Opere" (P. M.), vol. i. p. lxxxix. Among other matters contained in it, Della Palla writes to Machiavelli from Rome, that he finds the Pope very well disposed towards him, and inclined to give him some commission to write or to do other things. This Battista della Palla, now so high in the Pope's favour, is he who afterwards conspired against the Medici.

³ A copy of this edition exists in St. Mark's Library at Venice, cxxxiii., B 8-48010. It has no date, but is bound up with another comedy, entitled "Arstippia," of precisely the same form, type, paper, division of words, numeration, &c., dated *Rome 1524 in the month of August*. For this reason Gamba and others have judged the edition of the "Mandragola" to be also of the year 1524. The title runs thus: "Comedia | facetissima | intitolata | Mandragola | et recitata in Firenze." This Roman edition makes us infer the existence of some earlier Florentine one. In fact, the National Library of Florence possesses a copy of another old edition in 8vo among the books of the Magliabecchiana (k. 7. 58). Its sheets 1 and 4 are missing, and a description is given of it in Fossi's catalogue (vol. iii. col. 105), stating that as a lily is to be traced in the water-mark of the paper, it is believed to be of Florentine publication. Brunet attributes it to the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century, and adds: "Elle doit être la première de l'ouvrage." But in no case can it be of the fifteenth century.

from a new point of view and in a different light, his conception of the men and society of the time. He exhibits this society to us as in a photograph, and parades it before our eyes with almost cynical mirth. Nevertheless his reckless gaiety is sometimes interrupted by a sudden burst of tears that is hastily checked, and then—as though ashamed of his emotion—he tries to make us believe that it was almost a burst of laughter. If you would learn, so he says in the prologue, why the author devotes himself to subjects too light for one desirous to be considered a man of gravity and wisdom—

“ Scusatelo con questo, che s'ingegna
 Con questi vani peusieri
 Fare il suo tristo tempo più soave,
 Perchè altrove non ave
 Dove voltare il viso,
 Che gli è stato interciso
 Mostrar con altre imprese altra virtute,
 Non sendo premio alle fatiche sue.”¹

“ There is no possible remedy now for our ills. We must be satisfied to see every one stand apart, watching, sneering, and slandering. Thus the age strays from the old virtue ; for beholding how ready all are with their mockery and blame, no one strives to accomplish generous deeds which are dispersed by the winds and enveloped in clouds. But should any one seek to cow the author by evil-speaking, I warn you that he, too, knows how to speak evil, and indeed excels in the art ; and that he has no respect for any one in Italy, although he bows and scrapes to those better dressed than himself.”²

Callimaco is a Florentine aged thirty, who has quietly spent twenty years of his life in Paris. Hearing there great praises of the beauty and virtue of the wife of Nicias Calfucci, he comes to Florence on purpose to see her, and immediately falls desperately in love with her. This lady is named Lucrezia, and so good and pure that Callimaco's only hope lies in the foolishness of her husband, and the earnest wish of both to have children born to them. A certain Ligurio, a swindler, who frequents Calfucci's house and to whom Callimaco has promised money, is go-between in this intrigue. The simplicity and credulous witlessness of Messer Nicias, who bears the title of Doctor and has an excellent

¹ “Opere,” vol. v. p. 72. These words clearly show that they were written when he was already out of office.

² Ibid., vol. v. p. 73.

opinion of himself, are admirably depicted and furnish some of the wittiest scenes of the "Mandragola." Meanwhile Ligurio tries to persuade Messer Nicias to do as physicians advise and take his wife to the Baths. In this way, he thinks, Callimaco will find it easier to know her and enjoy her society. But Messer Nicias resists, for much as he desires to become a father, he considers it a tremendous undertaking to stir from home, and this doctor says one thing and that another, "and they don't know themselves what they mean."

"It vexes you to go away," said Ligurio to him, "because you are not accustomed to lose sight of the cupola of the Duomo." "You're wrong there," quickly answers Messer Nicias; "I was a great wanderer in my youth and never failed to go to the fair at Prato, nor is there a walled place near Florence that I have not visited. And more than that, I've been to Pisa and Leghorn, that I can tell you!" "Oh, Lord! Have you seen the sea? How much bigger is it than the Arno?" "The Arno, indeed! Why, it's four, six, seven times as big. One sees nothing but water, water, water!" At last it is settled that Ligurio is to ask the advice of the doctors while Nicias tries to persuade his wife to make the journey.

In the third and last scene of the first act, Callimaco anxiously inquires of Ligurio what has been decided, and Ligurio replies that the Calfucci will probably go to the Baths, but fears that this will be of no use to the lover. "I am afraid that you are right," answers Callimaco. "But what am I to do? what plan can I adopt? whither shall I turn? I must needs attempt somewhat, even if it be something great, or dangerous, or harmful, or infamous; it were better to die than live as I am now. Were I able to sleep by night, or to eat, or converse, or take pleasure in anything, I should be more patient and bide my time. But there is no cure for this matter, and if nothing chances to give me a little hope, I cannot fail to die; so, seeing that I must die, I shrink from nothing, but am ready to turn to any brutal, cruel, or atrocious means."

This language gives a very eloquent description of the violence of Callimaco's passion, before he has even spoken with the object of his love. Ligurio then declares that he is struck by a good idea, and proposes that Callimaco should be introduced to Nicias as a doctor. He will tell him more afterwards. And so it is arranged between them.

In the second act Ligurio presents Callimaco to Nicias as a physician, the inventor of a potion that would infallibly enable his wife to bear him a child. Only the first man who approached her after she had drunk it would speedily die. He must therefore allow his wife to see another man at first. The alarm of Nicias on hearing this, his attempts to speak Latin to the sham physician, his delight on hearing the latter reply in Latin quotations which he cannot understand, the ease with which he instantly consents on learning that the King of France and other monarchs have adopted the same expedient, and his continued belief in his own superior cunning, make this act exceedingly comic. But although Messer Nicias is won over, the wife has still to be persuaded ; and for this Ligurio suggests that the only mode of attack must be through her confessor, who is a friar. "But who will conquer the confessor?" asks Callimaco. "You and I, gold, our wickedness and theirs," replies the other ; and he now suggests speaking to the lady's mother, so that she may induce the confessor to bring the authority of religion to bear upon her daughter and win the latter's consent.

In the third act the mother has been already gained, but on condition that her conscience is not to be burdened. Prudent people, she says, must choose the best of bad alternatives. Meanwhile Nicias has given Ligurio the twenty-five ducats demanded by him to bribe the friar, and they are on their way to the church to carry out that design. "These friars," remarks Ligurio, "are keen-witted and crafty, because they know their own sins as well as ours. He who is unaccustomed to them is deceived by their ways, and does not know how to get round them."

And now Frà Timoteo comes on the stage for the first time, and from one point of view may really be considered the most remarkable character in the piece. He is found in the church, quietly chatting with a maid servant, and the dialogue between them forms, by its incomparable vivacity, spontaneousness, and thoughtless serenity, so strange a contrast with all that is about to take place as to remind the reader of Shakespeare's matchless art.

"If you wish to confess," says the friar, "I am at your service." "Not to-day," replies the woman, "I am in a hurry, and it has done me good to vent myself a little, without going on my knees. Have you recited those masses to our Lady?" "Yes, mistress, I have." "Then here's a florin ; and every Monday for two

months you are to say a funeral mass for my husband's soul. Good for nothing as he was, yet the flesh is weak ; I can't help feeling sorry when I remember him. Do you think he is really in Purgatory ?" "No doubt of it." "I can't be so sure of it. You know what he used to do to me sometimes. Oh ! how I used to complain of it to you. I pushed him away as much as I could ; but he teased me so much. Uh ! good Lord !" "Fear not, God's mercy is great. If man seeks to repent he is always able to do so." "Think you the Turks will come into Italy this year ?" "That they will if you don't say your prayers." "Mercy ! God save us from all these devilries ; I've a mighty dread of those impalers. But I see a woman in church who has got some fennel of mine ; I must go and speak to her. Good-day to you." "Good luck to you."¹

Meanwhile Nicias and Ligurio come in, and the latter instantly tells the friar that they have several hundred florins to give in alms, provided he will help them in a certain business. This business, however, is entirely fictitious, only brought forward to ascertain whether the friar would be ready to serve them for the sake of obtaining the money, and whether he could be depended upon for the real purpose required. In fact, seeing that he is willing to yield, Ligurio cunningly explains the whole thing to him, and obtains the desired promise. The women appear at this point, and the mother is assuring her daughter that she would never try to persuade her to do anything wrong. "But if Frà Timoteo tells you that there is no sin in it, you may be quite at rest." The daughter, however, cannot persuade herself "that it can be right that a man should die by disgracing her." And then the friar comes forward, and makes use of all his dexterity. "I have been consulting the books for more than two hours upon this matter, and, after much examination, I find many points in our favour, both in general and in particular. As to your conscience, you must cling to these generalities, that where there is the alternative of a certain good or an uncertain evil, we must never lose the good for fear of the evil. Here there is the certain good, that you will have a son and gain a soul for the Lord God. . . . It is the will and not the body that commits sin, and sin would consist in offending your husband, whereas you will do him a kindness ; it would be sin to do this deed with pleasure, but you dislike performing it. Besides this, in all things we

¹ Act iii. scene iii.

must look to the end. Your end is to fill a seat in Paradise, and make your husband happy." ¹ And he continues in this strain, even reminding the woman how the Bible says that Lot's daughters committed no sin because their intentions were good, and concludes by saying that it is a question of a venial offence that can be cleansed with holy water. "To what do you urge me, father?" here exclaims poor Lucrezia; and all bewildered, she promises to do as she is bid; but adds that she fears she shall never survive her grief and shame.

The fourth act is opened by Callimaco, who is suffering agonies of suspense. He hopes one moment, despairs the next. "You are mad," he says to himself; "you know that disillusion and repentance must follow, even if you gain your intent! But what is the worst that can befall you? To die and go to hell. Yet since so many worthy men have died and gone to hell, why should you be ashamed to go there yourself? Look your fate in the face! Fly from evil; or, if you cannot fly from it, bear it like a man! Don't succumb, don't abase yourself like a woman. But I cannot fix my mind upon this idea," "because I am so consumed by love for that woman, that I feel all shaken from my head to the soles of my feet; my legs tremble, my entrails stir, my heart leaps from my bosom, my arms give way, my tongue is mute, my eyes are dazzled, my brain whirls." ²

Ligurio again appears, and the plot that has been hatched draws rapidly to its close. Frà Timoteo has donned a disguise and become an active and powerful ally in the infamous cause, although behaving throughout with the easiest good humour. "For they speak truth who say that bad company brings men to the gallows. One goes wrong just as often through being too yielding and too good, as through being too wicked. The Lord knows I never meant to do harm to any one. I stayed in my cell, I said my prayers, I conversed with my penitents, and then came to me this devil of a Ligurio, who made me stain my finger in a crime, in which I have now plunged my arm and the whole of my person, and don't yet know how much farther I shall have to go. Yet I take comfort in this, that when a thing concerns many, many must concern themselves with it." ³ After this all goes according to the wishes of Callimaco.

The fifth and last act opens with another soliloquy of Frà

¹ Act iii. scene xi.

² Act iv. scene i.

³ Ibid., scene vi.

Timoteo, whose anxiety to know what has happened has cost him a sleepless night. "I said matins, I read one of the lives of the Holy Fathers, I went into the church and relit a lamp that had gone out, I changed the veil of a miracle-working Madonna. How many times have I told those monks to keep her clean! And then they are astonished if people don't pray to her! I remember the time when she had five hundred pictures, and now she hasn't twenty. And it is all our fault for not having known how to keep up her reputation. We used to recite prayers and make processions, so that there should always be plenty of fresh pictures. Now we no longer do anything of that kind, and then are surprised that devotion cools. Oh! what poor brains these monks of mine have! But I hear a great noise over there, in Messer Nicias's house!" All the dramatis personæ come in, happy and laughing, to bring Lucrezia to be purified, and the friar, remembering the promised alms-offering, recites prayers and bestows his blessing on the company. "Who would not be joyful?" is the last speech of the mother, and the comedy ends with a blessing pronounced from the altar upon adultery.

That which strikes us as most extraordinary, however, is neither the spectacle of a thoroughly corrupt society, nor the absence of any truly honest or virtuous character; but rather the appalling absence of conscience in all the characters, their horrible freedom from moral responsibility, and the manner in which they pass from good to evil without seeming to be aware of any change. Callimaco has fallen in love with Lucrezia before having seen her, and merely from hearing praises of her beauty and virtue; his passion quickly becomes uncontrollable, nor has it any other than a sensual aim. It makes life unbearable to him, and he is ready to recur to "any means, however brutal, cruel or atrocious." Scruples and fear of hell disturb him at one moment; but then, reflecting how many worthy men have gone to perdition, he thinks that he too should have the courage to face eternal punishment. The only virtuous character in the piece is the young wife, poor Lucrezia, a negative being, without any will of her own, and entirely at the mercy of the falsehood and caprice of the rest. When mother, husband, and all the others urge her to adultery in order that she may bear a child, she shudders and resists; but then being taken to church and into the presence of her confessor, she is easily persuaded by him that there can be no sin "in filling a seat in Paradise." So she not only ends

by resigning herself, but determines to enjoy her life gaily in the abyss of immorality into which she has been plunged. The clearest expression and most perfect personification of this state of things is found in Frà Timoteo. He says his prayers and recites mass, attends devoutly to the holy images and to confession; but when some charity money is offered him in consideration of his doing a deed of infamy, he is not in the least revolted. He reflects that there will be more masses to say, more candles to light; he studies the sacred writings, and, on finding a sophism adapted to the case, consents to promote an act of adultery; to persuade the unlucky Lucrezia that evil is good, and that by her own dishonour she will commit an action pleasing to the Almighty. It is true that he makes the passing reflection that bad company leads the best of men into evil; but the plunge is already taken and he is consoled by remembering that it is every one's interest to keep the crime concealed. He dusts the images, reads the lives of the saints, deplores the scanty piety of the times, and all the while is overcome by an intense desire to know if the sin prepared and made possible by his assistance has succeeded *ad votum*. He then pronounces a blessing upon all concerned from the altar.

Does not this comedy call up before us, as though evoked from our conscience, the tragic figure of the "Prince," rushing through the streets, brandishing a blood-stained sword and by force, fraud, and violence compelling his subjects to unite in order to build up a State, and create a fatherland? And then, teaching them discipline with the "Art of War," does he not lead them against the enemy, inciting them, not by Christian but by Pagan maxims, and the example of ancient Rome, to pour out their blood in defence of this State, this fatherland, and at last, through danger and misfortune, to learn to be men? Can we not hear the thunder of Martin Luther's mighty voice proclaiming the existence of conscience, its sacredness and inviolability, and thus driving even the Catholics to repentance and self-correction?

It has been well said that the "Mandragola" is the comedy of a society of which the "Prince" is the tragedy. The latter seeks to cure at the sword's point the evils which the former paints with a jest, but the jest equally indicates their hidden source. Accordingly it begins and ends within the walls of a church. Already the "Discourses" had bidden us seek in the Church for the germ of Italian corruption, and we are now shown a graphic representa-

tion of the manner in which religion, having sunk into a purely mechanical conventionality, can find sophistries to justify evil as easily as good, and thus make conscience a blank. It would seem from this play that men may commit evil unawares and without being wicked. The acts accomplished by them are no longer acts of their own. They would seem to be dictated and led by some outer force, now a passion, now an instinct, now a habit, now a prejudice, but never by anything worthy of the name of conscience. Therefore no remedy can be had but from some other exterior force. Steel is the only cure. Such was always Machiavelli's ruling idea, and whenever he expounds it, his spirit is fired, his diction gains precision, elegance, and captivating strength, he is as one inspired and lifted above himself. This idea was the main theme of the "Prince," and a distant flash of it is visible in the "Mandragola." Accordingly, in both these works the style and language of the author attain so high a standard as to convert them into the two finest literary masterpieces of Italian prose. Machiavelli undoubtedly stands first among our writers of prose. His every word expresses an idea, without useless ornament, without artifice, without effort of any sort. Men, events, inanimate things even, seem to have a language of their own and directly addressed to the reader. His writings teem with the admirable wit that springs from the lips of the people of Florence, and he occasionally reproduces with singular vigour even their somewhat ungrammatical idioms. He only employs his Latin scholarship so far as is strictly necessary to give force and dignity to his style. Even in his other works his classical learning is seldom allowed to be too preponderant, and certainly in his "Mandragola" the treasures of the spoken tongue are freely lavished in all their freshness, fragrance, and inexhaustible variety of colour and sound. Without ever stooping to vulgarity, he is always natural and spontaneous, and always elegant, without ever resorting to artifice.

Macaulay, whose literary judgments have an undoubted weight, had an almost limitless admiration for the "Mandragola." He considers it a proof that had Machiavelli devoted himself to the drama, he would have attained to the highest eminence, and would have produced a salutary effect upon the national literature and taste. "This," he says, "we infer, not so much from the degree, as from the kind of his excellence." . . . "By the correct and vigorous delineation of human nature it produces interest without a pleasing or skilful plot, and laughter without the least ambition

of wit." ¹ He considers Nicias to be the most original character in the whole comedy, and declares it to be beyond all praise.² Certainly this presumptuous simpleton, entirely unaware of his own foolishness, and the laughing-stock of all, is the truest and most ingenuous personage of a world wherein every one, including those most bound to have some conscience, are utterly devoid of any. The laughter aroused by Nicias, the comic situations he is always bringing about, are not spoilt for us by any extraneous consideration. In his way, therefore, he is perfect; his acquaintance is an artistic pleasure, unmarred by moral pain.

Nevertheless the "*Mandragola*" has a serious side that entirely escaped Macaulay's notice, just as he failed to discover its weakest point. On examining the fundamental unity of the play, and its leading idea, we see that Frà Timoteo is the character upon which our principal attention is fixed. In him we have pure comedy united to deep and murderous satire on Italian society, and this helps to enlarge our appreciation of the lofty genius that created this very singular character. Nevertheless we cannot often laugh heartily at Frà Timoteo. Dominated by graver thoughts, our imagination can neither have free vent, nor give itself up to purely æsthetic contemplation. The author endeavours to show us the comic side alone of the society before his eyes; but, in his mind, comedy necessarily led to satire, and whenever this change takes place we have to guess at his highest and deepest ideas because they are left in an abstract and uncertain shape. He has no longer the power to dress them in poetic or comic garb, and yet seeks to laugh at what cannot move us to laughter. Hence the atmosphere of true comedy rapidly disappears, and the characters lose their real and concrete physiognomy.

Some critics have declared Frà Timoteo to be a good monk, and that the author only intended to make him an example of the consequences of a false religion. But it remains to be proved that men can be good while assisting in the accomplishment of abominable actions, even when crowning them with the benediction

¹ Macaulay's "*Essays*," vol. i. p. 86.

² "But old Nicias is the glory of the piece. We cannot call to mind anything that resembles him. The follies which Molière ridicules are those of affectation, not those of fatuity. Coxcombs and pedants, not absolute simpletons are his game. Shakespeare has indeed a vast assortment of fools; but the precise species of which we speak is not, if we remember right, to be found there. . . . Cloten is an arrogant fool, Ostric a foppish fool, Ajax a savage fool; but Nicias is, as Thersites says of Patroclus, a positive fool" (Macaulay's "*Essays*," vol. i. p. 87).

of the Church. It is true that religion having once become corrupt and perverted into empty formalism, may be the source of great evil. But it is not true that men may pass from good to evil with the calm serenity of mind displayed by Frà Timoteo in the "Mandragola." And what can be said of a mother who laughingly asks her confessor's help to compass the dishonour of her own daughter ; or of the daughter who is virtuous, and yet ends by jesting over the wreck of her own virtue ? Now and then, indeed, the author sighs, as it were, against his will, and deplores the times in which he has been born and to which he belongs ; but these laments only prove that there is one side of human nature that he has forgotten to take into account. For the description he gives us of it in the "Mandragola," vigorous and original as it is, has not always the exactitude claimed for it by Macaulay. The investigation of social corruption studied apart from all else, enquiry into its causes and remedies, may often be useful as a prelude to, or for the creation of a science. But art, on the contrary, demands living realities, and is crushed by the practice of vivisection. For art requires that in whatever depth of crime or corruption the cry of conscience should still be audible, even if only from afar, since conscience can never be utterly extinguished, until human nature itself shall have ceased to exist. The transition from good to evil, even in the lightest and most deceptive form, can never be effected without moral suffering, and can never move us to careless mirth.

In a burst of genuine inspiration, Machiavelli was able to overcome the many difficulties in his way, and to rise superior to himself. His frequently happy power of dramatic representation, his freshness of style and depth of thought enabled him to compose a marvellous, if not faultless work. But when he again tried to explore this new vein, he could find no ore of the same quality. His attempts, more than once vainly repeated, proved that he was not born to be a true dramatic poet, although he had produced one excellent comedy. His ruling idea, in the shape in which it always appeared to him, was only fertile in political and historical science, and in that field alone unceasingly fruitful of novel food for thought. Throughout the sixteenth century the Italian stage persistently followed the road it had begun to take even before Machiavelli's attempts, and had to pay the penalty of its sins. Possessed of inexhaustible fancy and comic force, with a really prodigious wealth, spontaneity and elegance of language and style, with an unrivalled liveliness of dialogue, Italy produced an infinite

number of comedies, without achieving the creation of a really national comic stage,¹ such as, without preaching morality, is yet fitted for the improvement of mankind.

The "*Clizia*," performed in Florence in 1525,² was undoubtedly written after the "*Mandragola*," since in the third scene of the second act there is an allusion to the latter play. The action of the piece is dated 1506,³ that is two years after that of the "*Mandragola*." It is of very inferior merit, being no more than a simple imitation of the "*Casina*" of Plautus, which, as all know, was itself a copy from the Greek. Sometimes Machiavelli follows his original so closely as to give a literal translation; at others, where his imitation is less servile, he writes with far greater vivacity. But throughout the piece, not only is his comic power very inferior to that of the great Latin playwright he wishes to emulate, but he has weakened its best portions by a superfluity of sententious reflections and remarks.

The prologue begins by reiterating in grave, pompous prose the idea so frequently enunciated in the author's political works; namely, that as mankind is always the same, so that which once occurred in Athens has now happened even in Florence. He has fixed his choice on the Florentine incident, because nowadays Greek is no longer spoken; and thus he easily converts the ancient into a modern play.

Cleandro and his aged father, Nicomaco, are both in love with the maiden *Clizia*, who has been reared like a daughter of the house. Nicomaco wishes to make her the wife of his serving-man, *Pirro* and *Cleandro*, with an equally bad motive, tries to defeat his father's scheme, proposing to give her in marriage to his bailiff, *Eustachio*, and is assisted in this by his mother, who is aware of all that is going on. This situation, chiefly represented in a narrative form, occupies the first act, which Plautus, on the contrary, had cast in the shape of a very brilliant and laughable dialogue between the servant and the bailiff. And Machiavelli, not satisfied with narrating instead of representing his incidents,

¹ Besides the authors mentioned above, Herr Theodor Mundt also makes some just remarks upon "*La Mandragola*" at paragraph xiv. ("*Die Mandragola oder Komödie und Kirche*") of his work upon Machiavelli quoted by us elsewhere.

² As we shall presently see, Vasari speaks of this performance in his "*Vite dei Pittori*," and Nerli mentions it in one of his letters.

³ In the first scene of act i. *Cleandro* says: "When twelve years ago, in 1494," &c. "*Opere*," vol. v. p. 139.

also assigns a lengthy monologue to Cleandro, who after comparing the life of a lover with that of a soldier, indulges in a series of general reflections better suited to a political or historical dissertation. The second act is much more lively. The wife quarrels with her husband because she desires to marry the girl to the bailiff, "who knows how to attend to his business, has a capital and would live upon plain water, whereas the servant, Pirro, passes his life in taverns and at gambling tables, and would die of hunger in Altopascio." Then, remaining alone on the stage, she gives a most vivid description of the change that has come over her husband, and thus affords us a graphic picture of the life of Florentine burghers at that period. "He went to mass, looked after his affairs, held intercourse with the magistrates, was regular in all things. But ever since he has had a fancy for this girl, his business is neglected, his farms go badly, his trade is ruined. He is always angry without knowing why; he fidgets in and out of the house a thousand times a day, and does not know what he is doing." The diction of this act is very animated and full of Florentine phrases. It concludes with a dialogue between the servant and the bailiff, excellently imitated from that composing the first act of Plautus's comedy.

In the third act of "*Clizia*," Cleandro laments that his own father should be his rival in love. There is no real fun in this situation, nor has it any element of tragedy. Here, as in the "*Casina*," the wife at last agrees with her husband to leave everything to chance, which decides in favour of Pirro, according to Nicomaco's wish. The latter now feels assured of success, but has counted his chickens before they are hatched. He joyfully settles with his docile and cringing servant how the marriage is to be arranged, and in which house he is first to meet the bride alone. His wife, however, keeps strict watch over him, will not leave him an instant, and contrives matters in such a way that poor Nicomaco finds himself alone, not with *Clizia*, but with a servant lad in disguise. The manner in which the old husband is drawn into the trap and made a general laughing-stock, is really comic, and shows perhaps even more originality than is found in Plautus.¹ Throughout the greater part of this act Machiavelli

¹ Macaulay holds the same opinion: "The relation of the trick put upon the dotting old lover is exquisitely humorous. It is far superior to the corresponding passage in the Latin comedy, and scarcely yields to the accounts which Falstaff gives of his ducking" (Macaulay's "*Essays*," vol. i. p. 88).

closely follows, or indeed translates from, the "*Casina*."^{*} But the latter shows far greater truth to nature ; for here the maiden is betrothed to a slave, not, as in *Clizia*, to a free man, and her blind and absolute submission is therefore more probable and tolerable in the ancient than in the modern play. In the fifth act the wife, thanks to the plot she has contrived, obtains her end, and the humiliated husband at last makes his peace with her. A gentleman just arrived from Naples is discovered to be *Clizia*'s father, and her marriage with Cleandro is celebrated. This last incident is only announced in the comedy of Plautus, where indeed neither the maiden nor Cleandro appears upon the stage. Machiavelli follows this example as regards the girl. Plautus, however, understood that there was nothing really comic in the spectacle of love-rivalry between a father and son ; Machiavelli refused to follow him in this particular, and his work has suffered in consequence.

The "*Prose Comedy*," a very short work in three acts, rather resembles the so-called proverbs of the present day. The subject seems to have been taken from an incident that made much sensation in the more dissipated stratum of Florentine society. A servant girl receives the confidences of her old master, Amerigo, who has fallen in love with his gossip, the wife of Alfonso, and of Friar Alberigo, who is enamoured of her young mistress, Caterina. The latter, after hearing of her husband's avowal, tells the maid that she has lost patience and means to find a lover for herself, whereupon the maid speaks to her of the enamoured friar, and easily overcomes her objections to him. No sooner is the friar sure of his footing than he sets to work to upset the intrigue between Amerigo and his gossip, with whose husband he is acquainted. Amerigo's wife comes to Alfonso's house, and after meeting the friar there, waits to see her own husband, who enters expecting to be received by his gossip. There is a noisy scene, in which Amerigo is mocked and flouted. In the midst of it the friar appears, as if by chance, and immediately tries to reconcile the husband and wife, who, after another burst of indecent abuse, come to terms with each other, and by choosing the friar for their confessor, leave him master of the situation.

^{*} In fact, the fourth scene of this fourth act is an almost literal translation from the second scene of act iii. of the "*Casina*," and so, too, the sixth from the fourth, and the seventh from the fifth. Even the soliloquy in scene viii. of act iv. of the "*Clizia*" is imitated from the first scene of act iv. of the "*Casina*."

In this work Machiavelli's language is even grosser than usual, narrative supplies the place of action, and there is no true development of character. Nevertheless, there is plenty of the usual brilliant dialogue.¹

We must now say a few words of two other plays, the "Comedy in Verse," and the "Andria," which is a translation from Terence. The authenticity of the former work has been disputed by many writers, although it is regarded by some as a production of Machiavelli's youth. There is one very remarkable circumstance that might indeed incline us to believe it his; namely, that the famous Strozzi Codex in the Florence National Library comprises an autograph copy of the play. But this external proof loses value when we remember that the same collection of manuscripts contains a "Descrizione della peste," also in Machiavelli's handwriting, which no one at the present day attributes to his authorship. Then, too, at the end of the comedy is the inscription, also in his hand: "*Ego Barlachia recensui*,"² supporting the theory of his having copied the writings of these authors in this codex, a theory we shall find additionally confirmed further on. And if we turn

¹ Polidori places this comedy among the works unjustly attributed to Machiavelli, although he allows that there is no internal evidence "to prevent its being attributed to the Florentine playwright." But he regards it as an imitation of the "Mandragola," and for this sole reason will not believe it to have been written by Machiavelli. ("Prefazione," already quoted, p. xv.) There is certainly some resemblance between the two plays, but no trace of imitation or *derivation* by another hand, as Polidori asserts but does not prove. It may be said that the author repeats himself, but that would merely show the scanty fertility of his comic vein. In fact, after the "Mandragola," as we have already said, he produced nothing more of any true originality in his capacity of comic poet.

² Polidori mentions that this Barlachia or Barlacchi was a public crier in Florence, and supposes that Machiavelli assumed his name almost as an announcement that in his comedies he acted as a public crier of the vices of his fellow citizens. *Vide* the above-quoted preface to "Le Opere Minori" del Machiavelli, p. xiii; the note at the end of the play p. 586, and the description of the Strozzi Codex, at p. 415, of the same volume. Professor Hillebrand, on the contrary, holds that the word *recensui* is here used in the meaning of *révèli*, and therefore proves nothing. Barlachia, he thinks, here only stands for simpleton, such in fact being the colloquial meaning of the term *barlachio* or *barbalucchio*, and was adopted as a *nom de plume* by Machiavelli in a passing caprice. (Hillebrand, "Études," &c., p. 352, note i.) This, however, is a simple hypothesis. It seems to us that the comedy is absolutely unworthy of Machiavelli, as indeed Professor Hillebrand also agrees. We may note in conclusion that Vasari, when describing the festivities and performances got up by the *Compagnia della Cazzuola* in Florence, mentions Barlacchi as one of the pleasant men of that time, and says that he took an active part in those festivities. "Vite," &c., vol. xii. p. 16.

from external to internal evidence, it would be very difficult to assign this "Comedy in Verse" to Machiavelli. Hinging entirely on a confusion of the two names of Camillo and Catillo, it represents an incident of ancient Roman life. It has no plot, no charm of style, its characters are lacking in life and spontaneity, and it is excessively tedious reading. Crammed with perpetual monologues, it has none of those witty Florentine quips and turns of speech, which are never wanting to the plays and poems of Machiavelli. Even looking through it at random, it would be hard to credit him with verses such as those of the monologue beginning thus :

"Oh ! che disgrazia, oh ! che infelicità
È quella di chi vive in gelosia !
Oh ! quanti savi tener pazzi fa,
Ma de' pazzi giammai savi non fe.
Non si mangia un boccon mai che buon sia ;
Usasi sempre solo. Adunque egli è
Piacer da mille forche. E spesse volte
Stassi desto la notte a udir quel dice
Sua donna, perchè già n'è sute colte ;
Che c'è chi in sogno i fatti suoi ridice."¹

It runs on in this way for sixty verses. Another monologue begins thus :

"Oh ! che miseria è quella degli amanti,
Ma molto più di quelli
Ch' hanno i lor modi strani a sofferire !
Io, per me, innanzi vuo' prima morire,
Che seguir tai cervelli."²

And it continues in the same style throughout fifty-six more verses. The entire comedy is full of stuff of this kind, and worse. Even Polidori, who has published it among the works of Machiavelli, is very doubtful of its authenticity. Hillebrand, although accepting it as authentic, and discovering occasional beauties here and there, also allows it to be unworthy of the author of "La Mandragola." Macaulay, however, denies that it can be genuine, asserting that neither its merits nor defects bear any resemblance to those of Machiavelli.³ And in this opinion we fully concur.

"Andria" is only a translation of Terence's comedy of the same name. Comparison with the original shows certain points

¹ Act i. scene v.

² Act ii. scene v.

³ "The latter we can scarcely believe to be genuine. Neither its merits nor its defects remind us of the reputed author" (Macaulay's "Essays," vol. i. p. 88).

where the Latin phraseology has not been faithfully rendered, and others in which the Italian version is still obscure and clumsy, thereby leading us to the conclusion that it was never revised. In general, however, it is not only faithful to the original, but has a far greater amount of freshness and spontaneity than can be found in more modern translations.¹

These are the plays of the Florentine Secretary. But we should not forget to mention how it has frequently been asserted that "La Sporta," the better of the two comedies by Giovan Battista Gelli, was written from rough sketches on the same theme left by Machiavelli.² And this assertion, although contradicted by others, has been abundantly confirmed by Ricci, who, in the enumeration he gives of his grandfather's works in his "Priorista," plainly

¹ Here are a few examples. In scene v. of act i., Pamphilus, in speaking of Cremetas, who after at first refusing, is now willing to grant him his daughter, becomes suspicious and says: *Aliquid monstri atunt*. Machiavelli translates this literally: "They nourish some monster," which only makes nonsense. Cesari gives the far better rendering: "There must be some devilry in this." Further on, in speaking of Misode, who *laborat e dolore*, where it is meant that she is suffering the pains of labour, Machiavelli simply translates: *she is dying of pain*. In scene iii. of act ii., the servant Darus advises Pamphilus to pretend to his friends that he still desires the maiden, although he has ceased to care for her, because only by this device can he lull their suspicions and be enabled to continue his evil practices, and preserve his liberty. If, on the other hand, he were to declare that he no longer wanted the girl, his friends would try to turn him from his bad ways by seeking him another bride, and would certainly find one, notwithstanding his poverty, as they would look for one without any dowry. It is certain, says Darus, that Cremetas will not give thee his daughter, and thus thou canst continue thy practices: *nec tu ea causa minueris—Hæc que facis*. Machiavelli's rendering is: *Neither for this cause must thou abstain from doing that which thou dost*, which is not nearly so clear as Cesari's version: *it will not be necessary for you to change your way of life*. Then the servant adds, that as to saying that no other bride will be found, because no one would bestow a wife on one in thy condition, that could be easily contradicted, because thy father would rather give thee a pauper bride than allow thee to continue in a course so opposed to morality. *Nam quod tu speras propulsabo facile: uxorem his moribus—Dabit nemo. Inopem inveniet potius quam te corrumpi sinat*. Machiavelli translates: *It is easy to confute that which thou fearest, for no one would give a wife to such conduct: he would rather bestow her on a pauper*. Here there is both inexactitude and obscurity. It is not easy to understand the meaning of *dar moglie a cotesti costumi*. The other words are no rendering of the original. Cesari gives this translation: "As regards the hope you express by saying: 'No one would give a wife to one like myself,' I can cast it down with a breath. Your father would find you one without a dowry, rather than let you go to the bad in this way." This rendering is affected, but is far clearer and more exact than that of Machiavelli.

² Moreni, "Annali della tipografia del Torrentino," p. 19 (Florence, Francesco Daddi, 1819), and so also two other writers.

declares that Machiavelli also composed another play, "entitled 'La Sporta,' founded on the idea of the 'Aulularia' of Plautus, and that some fragments of it, once possessed by Bernardino di Giordano, having fallen into the hands of Giovan Battista Gelli, the latter, after making some trifling additions, gave it to the world as his own work."¹ Gelli, on the other hand, in his dedicatory epistle says that he took his subject from real life; acknowledges in the prologue that he has designedly imitated Plautus and Terence, and in scene iv. of act iii. refers to "La Mandragola" and "La Clizia," without adding any comment. However, it is an acknowledged fact that he not only studied Machiavelli a great deal, but also copied him. The theme of "Circe," Gelli's best work, is to be found in the "Asino d'oro" of Machiavelli, who had borrowed it from the ancients; and his second comedy, entitled "L'Errore," was at least in part, as he implicitly allows, imitated from "La Clizia."² "La Sporta," however, is far better, and on reading it attentively we can sometimes trace the hand of the Florentine Secretary in the greater truthfulness and vivacity of the dialogue, and in certain monologues containing some of his well-known touches of reflection. We believe that it was Gelli who greatly complicated the plot of the piece, by the introduction of episodes and secondary personages, such as Machiavelli always took care to avoid. Probably the latter had only sketched the general framework, and begun to colour the scenes and dialogues here and there in his incomparably vivacious manner. This, however, is mere hypothesis, and his rough sketch being lost, it can never be ascertained what was his exact share in the composition of "La Sporta." In any case this could neither greatly add to, nor detract from his fame as a comic author, for that must always mainly depend upon "La Mandragola," the only play proving him to have possessed any real dramatic genius. For this work was the birth of a fit of happy inspiration, of true poetic creativeness, never again to be repeated in his life.

¹ Quartiere S. Spirito, at sheets 160^r.

² "The plot of the play turns on a similar incident to that of Machiavelli's 'Clizia'" (Prologue to "L'Errore").



CHAPTER XI.

The "Golden Ass"—"The Capitoli" and other minor poems—"Dialogue on Language"—"Description of the Plague"—"Dialogue on Anger and the methods of its cure"—"The tale of the Archfiend Belphegor"—Other minor writings.



It was mainly during these years that Machiavelli employed his leisure hours in writing several minor works in verse and prose, of which it is now time to speak. As to the few poems he produced, his verses are easy, often satirical and pungently vivacious, but they have too much resemblance to prose. Energetic expressions, profound and well-directed thoughts may frequently be found in them; but they are always philosophic maxims and considerations reminding us of the "Prince" and the "Discourses," without force of imagery, originality of exposition, or any quality, in short, that is essential to genuine poetry. Nevertheless, these verses often enable us to understand their author's mental condition, and thereby assist us to a clearer conception of the history of his intellect.

The "Golden Ass" is the commencement of a poem in *terza rima*, upon which the author was engaged in 1517, as is shown by a letter addressed by him to Lodovico Alamanni¹ in the same year, proving that he considered this to be a work of much importance. Yet, after writing eight very short chapters, he laid it aside, having lost all impulse or desire to continue a narrative devoid of plot, or passion, and without charm. The title is borrowed from Apuleius and Lucian, the theme from Plutarch's dialogue, "The

¹ "Opere," vol. vii. letter xlv. p. 152.

Grasshopper," from which Gelli also derived his "Circe." Here and there, too, we perceive a certain tendency to imitate the "Divina Commedia," but the substance of it is, or is intended to be, a satire on the Florentines of Machiavelli's own day. The poet tells us that after having long renounced stabbing this man and that in his writings, he has had a sudden return of his old passion, specially moved thereunto because the times afforded so large a field for satire. Entering a wild forest, he is met, not by Dante's three wild beasts, but by one of Circe's damsels, surrounded by her herd, consisting of men transformed into animals. He is conducted by her to a palace, and warned that he also will be changed into a beast. Meanwhile he sups with his companion, and gives the following minute, if neither artistic nor elegant description of her charms :

"Avea la testa una grazia attrattiva
Tal ch'io non so a chi me la somigli,
Perchè l'occhio al guardarla si smarriva.
Sottili, arcati e neri erano i cigli;
Perchè a plasmargli fur tutti gli Dei,
Tutti e' celesti e superni consigli." ¹

Then, being left alone, he immediately, like a philosopher, begins to ponder the reasons :

"Del variar delle mondane cose,"

and proceeds to enounce his well-known considerations. That which causes the great to fall from the summit of their power is their unceasing greed for dominion. Venice began to decline from the moment that she tried to extend her territory on the mainland. Sparta and Athens began to lose strength when they had vanquished their neighbours. The commonwealths of Germany, on the contrary, with no more than six miles of territory, are free and at peace. Florence, with her boundaries close to her walls, could defy the Emperor Henry IV., but at the present day quails before every one. It is certain that a government is far more durable when it has good laws and pure manners ; but even then we cannot be assured of lasting tranquillity, because change is inevitable in human events.

¹ "Opere," vol. v. "Asino d'oro," chap. iv. p. 397.

"La virtù fa le region tranquille;
 E da tranquillità poi ne risolta
 L'ozio, e l'ozio arde i paesi e le ville.
 Poi, quando una provincia è stata involta
 Ne' disordini un tempo, tornar suole
 Virtute ad abitarvi un' altra volta.
 Quest'ordine così permette e vuole
 Chi ci governa, acciò che nulla stia
 O possa star mai fermo sotto 'l sole."

So it has been and will always be. Good follows evil and *vice versa*; the one is the cause of the other. Those are much deceived who think to escape such vicissitudes by force of prayer and fasting.

"Creder che senza te, per te contrasti
 Dio, standoti ozioso e ginocchioni,
 Ha molti regni e molti Stati guasti."

Prayer is quite necessary to the people, and he who forbade it would be mad:

"Ma non sia alcun di sì poco cervello,
 Che creda, se la sua casa ruina,
 Che Dio la salvi senz 'altro puntello;
 Perchè e' morrà sotto quella ruina."¹

This, as all may perceive, is not poetry, but rather paragraphs of the "Discourses" put into verse. There is less philosophy in the three concluding chapters. The beautiful maiden takes the poet to see the animals, and he first gives us a catalogue of them, and then pauses to converse with a fat hog, asking him if he wishes to be again a man. He receives in reply the well-known eulogy on the condition of beasts who are free from all cares and worries, and the hog does his best to prove that in every respect the lot of animals is preferable to that of mankind.²

According to Busini, the allusions in the "Golden Ass" are aimed at Luigi Guicciardini and the adherents of the Medici, but he can tell us nothing in support of this theory.³ It is true

¹ "Asino d'oro," chap. v.

² Both La Fontaine in his fable, "Les Compagnons d'Ulysse" (xii. 1), and Fénelon in his dialogue, "Ulysse et Gryllus," have also borrowed from Plutarch, incited perhaps by the example of Machiavelli and Gelli. In La Fontaine, a wolf, a lion, and a bear take the place of the hog. In Fénelon, as in Machiavelli and Plutarch, it is the hog that refuses to become a man.

³ Busini, "Lettere," p. 243.

that Machiavelli himself declares that among the animals brought before him he found old acquaintances whom he had once regarded as so many Fabiuses and Catoes, but had afterwards recognized by their deeds to be mere sheep and lambs, and that on this account he wished to attack them. But the poem was broken off before the transformation of the hero into a donkey, just at the point where the allusions would have become more transparent; accordingly, if Busini and his contemporaries failed to interpret their meaning, it is hopelessly impossible for us to succeed at the present date.

Other minor poems now follow in the "Opere"; first the short "Capitolo dell' Occasione,"¹ addressed to Filippo dei Nerli, formerly thought to be imitated from a Greek epigram in the "Anthologia Planudea," but which is instead almost a literal rendering of the version of the same by Ausonias in epigram xii.² Of greater length is the "Capitolo di Fortuna," addressed to Giovan Battista Soderini. With much clearness, spontaneity, and some felicitous imagery, Machiavelli once more preaches his ideas upon Fortune. The only happy man is he that can attach himself to the wheels upon which Fortune turns; but as their movement is perpetually changing, even this is not enough. Hence we ought to be ready to leap from wheel to wheel, but the hidden virtue that rules us will not allow us to do so: we cannot change our person, neither can we our nature. Often, accordingly, the higher we have mounted, the lower do we fall, and it is then that Fortune shows the extent of her power:

"Avresti tu mai visto in loco alcuno
Come un' aquila in alto si trasporta,
Cacciata dalla fame e dal digiuno?
E come una testuggine alto porta,
Acciocchè il colpo nel cader la 'nfranga,
E pasca sè di quella carne morta?"³

¹ "Opere," vol. v. p. 419.

² The Greek epigram is in the "Anthologia Planudea," iv. 275. The imitation by Ausonias, "In simulacrum Occasionis et Poenitentiae," contains certain details wanting to the original, but employed by Machiavelli; and this proves beyond doubt that the latter borrowed from Ausonias. "La Penitenza," to which Machiavelli alludes, is not mentioned in the Greek, but only in the Latin epigram, that besides is almost literally translated in the Italian. Poliziano had already collated the Greek epigram with that of Ausonias, and remarked on their points of agreement and difference in his "Miscellanea," chap. xlix. p. 265, Basle edition of 1553. *Vide*, too, Jacobs, "Anthol. Gr.," vol. viii. p. 145 and fol.

³ "Opere," vol. v. p. 425.

This "Capitolo," undoubtedly one of the best, is followed by another, "Della Ingratitudine," addressed to Giovanni Folchi.¹ The latter is far more hastily written, but has several noteworthy allusions to the author's misfortunes. Torn by the fangs of others' envy, so Machiavelli begins, my unhappiness would be greatly increased were not the Muses responsive to the strings of my lyre. I know that I am no true poet, yet still hope to glean a few laurel branches in the path that is bestrewn with them :

" Cantando dunque, cerco dal cuor torre,
E frenar quel dolor de' casi adversi,
Cui dietro il pensier mio furioso corre ;
E come del servir gli anni sien persi
Come in fra rena si semini ed acque,
Sarà or la materia de' miei versi."

When the stars were vexed by the glory of mankind, Ingratitude, the daughter of Avarice and Suspicion, was born, and has her chief abode in courts and in the hearts of princes. She deals her wounds with three poisoned darts : by leaving benefits unrecompensed, by forgetting them altogether, and lastly by positively insulting her benefactors.

" Questo colpo trapassa dentro all' ossa,
Questa terza ferita è più mortale,
Questa saetta vien con maggior possa."

He then adds that under popular government, Ingratitude is all the greater in proportion with its ignorance ; consequently worthy citizens are always badly remunerated by it, and sometimes driven to meditate the establishment of tyranny. He refers to Greek and Roman history, Aristides, Scipio, and Cæsar, before touching upon his own times, in which he finds princes to be even more ungrateful than the masses, and instances the great Captain Consalvo who has earned his sovereign's distrust in reward for his defeat of the French—in *premio delle galliche sconfitte*.

This allusion proves the "Capitolo" to have been written no later than 1515. And Machiavelli then concludes, almost in self-admonishment :

¹ "Opere," vol. v. p. 427.

" Dunque non sendo Ingratitudin morta,
 Ciascun fuggir le Corti e Stati debbe ;
 Che non c'è via che guidi l'uom piû corta
 A pianger quel ch'e' volle, poi che l'ebbe." ¹

In the "Capitolo dell' Ambizione," addressed to Luigi Guicciardini,² he again falls back upon politico-philosophic considerations. It must have been composed soon after its predecessor, for it frequently alludes, as to matters of recent date, to the fraternal struggle of the Petrucci in Sienna, which broke out in the year 1516. Ambition began with Cain, and mankind has never since been delivered from it. Consequently there is no peace in the world ; kingdoms and states have been undone ; princes overthrown, and if you would know why ambition succeeds in one case and fails in another, I will tell you that this depends upon whether ferocity of mind be coupled with it or not. And should any one blame nature because she no longer gives us men endowed with this energy, I would remind him that education can always correct nature's defects. Education once made Italy prosperous and powerful, Italy that—

" Or vive (se vita è vivere in pianto)
 Sotto quella rovina e quella sorte,
 Ch' ha meritato l'ozio suo cotanto."

For if you look upon this land, you will behold nought but slaughter and desolation. Fathers and children are killed, many fly for refuge to strange regions, mothers weep the fate of their daughters, ditches and streams are stained with blood, and full of human remains :

" Dovunque tu gli occhi rivolti e giri,
 Di lacrime la terra e sangue è pregna,
 E l'aria d'urli, singulti e sospiri."

Such are the fruits of Ambition. But why need I glance afar, when here in Tuscany, Ambition is hovering over the mountains, and has already scattered sparks among these envious people, sufficient to consume both town and country if they be not quickly trampled out by some better ordering of affairs.³ Machiavelli here alludes to the war with Urbino, begun just at

¹ " Opere," vol. v. pp. 427-432.

² Ibid., vol. v. p. 433.

³ Ibid., vol. v. p. 438.

that time and conducted by Lorenzo dei Medici, who started from Florence in May, 1516.

There is little worth remark in the *terzine* of the "Capitolo Pastorale," or the Serenade in octave verse.¹ The subject of the former leaves no opening either for satire or philosophic reflection; its merits should be purely poetical, and therefore Machiavelli's pen moves more languidly. The octaves are sufficiently easy, but compared with those of Poliziano and Ariosto, can command but scanty admiration. He also composed six "Canti Carnascialeschi" in different metres. Several of these are dashing and natural, but that is all. They lack the freshness and vivacity of description so often found in those of Lorenzo dei Medici, the creator of this style of poem. Consequently, their abundant grossness is nothing but sheer indecency. In the first of the series, the "Canto dei Diavoli," fiends come leaping down upon the earth, and declaring themselves the authors of all evil and all good, urge mankind to follow their lead. In the second, the "Canto d'amanti disperati e di donne," lovers bemoan the tortures suffered by them in vain for love upon earth, and declare that they are positively happier in Hell; the women are disposed to take pity on them, but it is now too late, the hour of love is past, and they conclude, therefore, by warning maidens not to be too coy, lest they should suffer vain remorse for their wasted hours. The third, entitled "Canto degli Spiriti beati," is a lament on the ills by which mankind is afflicted, especially in Italy.

"Tant è grande la sete
Di gustar quel paese,
Ch' a tutto il mondo diè la legge pria,
Che voi non v'accorgete
Che le vostre contese
Agl' inimici vostri apron la via.
* * * *

"Dipartasi il timore,
Nimicizie e rancori,
Avarizia, superbia e crudeltade.
Risorga in voi l'amore
De' giusti e veri onori,

¹ Foscolo praises the "Serenade." Vide "Epistolaria," vol. i. p. 73; letter to F. Arrivabene, dated 1807. "Machiavelli was not a great poet, but some verses written when in love, show how warmth of feeling spurred his powers." He then quotes some lines of the "Serenade."

E torni il mondo a quella prima etade
 Così vi sien le strade
 Del cielo aperte alla beata gente,
 Nè saran di virtù le fiamme spente."¹

From these verses it will be seen, how even amid the fun and indecency of the "Canti Carnascialeschi," Machiavelli finds room for his usual reflections, his persistent thought of the Italian fatherland, and of ancient valour. The "Canto degli uomini che vendono le pine," and the "Canto de' ciurmadori," have a nearer resemblance than the rest to genuine Carnival songs. They are followed by a very short canzonet, two octaves and a sonnet. The canzonet, beginning with the words: *Se avessi l'arco e l'ale*, is believed by several modern critics to be an imitation of a Greek epigram in the "Anthologia Palatina";² but, besides the difficulty of proving that there is any patent imitation, the only codex containing the Anthologia of Cefala, that is of Palatino, was made known by Salmasio some time after the death of Machiavelli. The two octaves and the sonnet have not much value, and treat of love, like the other sonnet printed in the letter dated 31st of January, 1515. We have already mentioned the three sonnets to Giuliano dei Medici, and the epigram on Soderini. It is quite possible that there may be other short poems by Machiavelli still left unedited, for he frequently composed them as a pastime. In the Vatican Library there is a juvenile sonnet of his, addressed to his father, and almost unintelligible, on account of being written in a jargon teeming with slang, reminding us of Burchiello. We publish it in the Appendix.³

¹ "Opere," vol. v. p. 456.

² Epigram xii. No. 78, in the "Anthologia Palatina."

³ This sonnet will be found in the Appendix (XII.) of the Italian edition, doc. xi., together with the famous one addressed to Giuliano dei Medici, "Io ho, Giuliano, in Gamba un paio di geti," taken from the same Vatican manuscript, and having certain variations deserving of notice. For copies of these sonnets we are indebted to the kindness of Signor Giulio Salvadori, who discovered them in vol. iii. of the "Codice miscellaneo vaticano," 5225, at f. 673 and f. 674. They are among many other "Capitoli" by writers of the Cinquecento, including that "Dell' Ambizione" also by Machiavelli. This, however, is in a later handwriting than that of the two sonnets, which are distinguishable from the generality of the sheets in the volume, by the coarser and browner paper upon which they are written. On comparing the characters of these two sonnets with a photographic *fac-simile* of Machiavelli's autograph, Signor Salvadori decided that they were not written by Machiavelli, although in a similar hand. "The writing is certainly

Now coming to the literary compositions in prose, we will accord the first place to the "Dialogo sulla lingua," a discussion upon the question whether the written language of Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio should be styled Italian or Florentine. The reasons adduced by Polidori for his doubts whether this "Dialogue" were really by Machiavelli, do not appear to us of any value. He considers it impossible that Machiavelli, who had said that, at least among many ills, the coming of the barbarians had conferred upon Italy the one inestimable boon of the new language, should afterwards, as in this dialogue, harshly censure those who call it Italian rather than Florentine or Tuscan. But the dispute concerning the name implies nothing against the merit of the new tongue. Signor Polidori also finds it impossible that one who so constantly deplored the woes of Italy, should then blame Dante for having foretold such terrible ruin to Florence, adding that fortune, to prove the poet a liar, has instead brought the city "to her present state of happiness and tranquillity." He interprets these words as a favourable allusion to princely rule, and cannot think, he says, that Machiavelli would have been capable of uttering them.¹ Nevertheless, the ex-secretary frequently praised the condition of Florence at his own day, and in fact its condition was by no means one of persistent wretchedness. There can be no allusion in the Dialogue to the princely rule that was only inaugurated after his death, and, for anything that we know to the contrary, the "Dialogue" may have been written even earlier than 1512, namely, in times which Machiavelli might have unreservedly praised. Besides, all doubts raised by Signor Polidori or others, must yield to the weighty testimony of Ricci, who plainly says that this work is Machiavelli's, although partly written in a manner differing from his usual style. He further adds that "Bernardo Machiavelli, son of the said Niccolò, and now seventy-four years of age, declares that

of the same school," he said in conclusion, "and although more general in the first than in the second half, was in use throughout the sixteenth century. The paper, made of hemp instead of flax, undoubtedly dates from the Cinquecento." And Professor Monaci of the Roman university (consulted by Signor Salvadori at my request) was also of the same opinion. The discovery in the Vatican of so old a copy of the sonnet to Giuliano dei Medici, among other writings of Machiavelli, seems to us to convalidate all that we have said elsewhere (vol. ii. p. 200 and fol.) regarding its authenticity.

¹ *Vide* Polidori's preface, to which we have frequently referred; pp. xiv. and xv.

he remembers hearing his father speak of it (the 'Dialogue') and often seeing it in his hands."¹ Although it certainly shows a certain stiffness and classicality unusual to Machiavelli, it contains nothing to justify the doubts so often mooted as to the authorship of the "Dialogue." Its differences of form are not only easily to be explained by the different nature of so erudite and literary a theme, but are few in number, and may also be met with in the "Discourses," the "Prince," and the "Histories." The rest of the work is not wanting in the usual vivacity, graphic power, and spontaneity. And on examining its substance, we find comparisons, observations, and thoughts of so much acuteness and originality, and so peculiarly of the Machiavellian stamp, that all doubt is necessarily dispelled.

For this "*Dialogo sulla lingua*" opens with the fresh enunciation, in a somewhat grandiloquent style, of the sentiment seldom wanting in any work of Niccolò Machiavelli, whether great or small, namely, that our chief duty is claimed by our native land, to which we all owe our entire being. He then goes on to say that he has been impelled to write "by the question frequently raised during the past days, whether the idiom employed by the Florentine poets and prose writers should be named Italian, Tuscan, or Florentine. Some assert that it is the adverb of affirmation that gives its special character to every tongue, and thus there would be the language of *sì*, the language of *och* and of *hvis*, as that of *yes*, of *hyo* (*ja*), &c. But if this were true, Sicilians and Spaniards would speak the same language. Accordingly, others are found to maintain that only the part of speech called the verb is the chain and essence of a tongue. Therefore, in the opinion of these men, the different tongues may be distinguished by the difference of their verbs; whereas those varying in their nouns and other parts of speech, but not in their verbs, own a common origin. Now, the different provinces of Italy vary a great deal as to their nouns, less as to their pronouns, and very little as to their verbs, and therefore can all be reciprocally understood with sufficient ease. There is some variety of accent in the speech of Italians, but not so much as to prevent them from understanding one another. The Tuscans, for instance, accentuate their words on the vowel sounds, while the Romagnols and Lombards suppress these. Considering, then,

¹ "Codice Ricci," No. 692 among the Palatine Codices of the National Library in Florence, at p. 430.

the differences existing in the Italian tongue, we must see which of its modes of speech is that wielding the pen. Our first writers, with a few rare exceptions, are all Florentines. Boccaccio tells us that he writes in the Florentine tongue; Petrarca does not mention the subject; Dante states that he writes in court language, and condemns every special Italian tongue including the Florentine. But Dante was hostile to Florence, and censured her in all things. Besides, common speech signifies that which is rather common than special, and, *vice versa*, special signifies that which is rather particular than common, since there is no tongue in existence that has not borrowed somewhat from intercourse with others. And new doctrines and new arts must inevitably bring with them new words and modes of speech. Such words, however, become modified by the moods, cases, and accents of the language into which they are introduced, and become incorporated with it, for were it otherwise, languages would be like patchwork and clumsily turned. So with us foreign words are converted into Florentine. It is in this manner that languages are enriched, but they afterwards become mongrel from a super-abundance of novel expressions. It needs, however, a very long course of time to effect all this, excepting in case of an invasion, for then the language perishes altogether, and it has to be reconstructed by its writers, even as we are now doing with Latin and Greek.* Now I would ask of Dante, what is there that is not Florentine in his writings?" And here, for the sake of discussion, Machiavelli begins an argument in the shape of a dialogue, to prove that with few exceptions every word employed by the immortal poet is purely Florentine.

Every language, he remarks, is necessarily more or less mixed; but that "may be called a national tongue, which converts words borrowed from others to its own use, and is sufficiently strong not to be changed by borrowed words, but to change them, inasmuch as that which it takes from others, it takes to itself and appropriates as its own." He then explains his meaning more clearly

* Let the reader note the resemblance of these ideas with those expounded in Machiavelli's political works.—New words first enrich a language, but then, by over-increase, corrupt it. It then becomes necessary to purify it, seeking out its primitive forms in the works of its best ancient writers. Virtue fortifies States and renders them powerful. Victory and power give security, and security generates indolence, which corrupts and leads to cowardice, vice, and hence to the decay of States. In order to revive them it is necessary to re-establish them in their primitive form.

by resorting to one of his usual comparisons. "The armies of the Romans comprised two legions of their citizens, in all twelve thousand strong,¹ and twenty thousand men of other nations; nevertheless, as the former were the real backbone of the army, so it was always known as the Roman army. And you, Dante, who have in your writings," so continues Machiavelli, "twenty legions of Florentine words, and make use of Florentine cases, tenses, moods and desinences, how can you believe that chance words can change the name and nature of a language? If you call it the general language, because the same verbs are used throughout Italy, nevertheless these are altered so much as to be quite different. You are misled by this: that you and other Florentine writers attained to so great a celebrity as to cause our vocabulary to be adopted and used throughout Italy. Therefore, compare the books written by other provinces before we wrote, with those written later, and you will at once discern a mighty difference. Writers of other parts of Italy now toil very hard to imitate our tongue, and yet do not always succeed, for nature is stronger than art. When they employ terms of their own, they polish them in the Tuscan fashion. Then in comedies, where it is necessary to use familiar terms and expressions, which must be colloquial in order to be known, all writers who are not Tuscans fail of success. For if one of these should wish to use sayings of his own district, he will make a garment of patch-work; but if he refuses to use them, being ignorant of Tuscan expressions, he will produce a maimed and imperfect piece of work. And I will cite as an example 'I Suppositi' of Ariosto of Ferrara.² Here you have an elegant composition, an ornate and regular style; a plot that is well arranged and better developed; but you will find it devoid of the witticisms required for a comedy of that kind, and from no other cause than that I have mentioned, namely, because the author rejected Ferrarese sayings and did not know any Florentine ones."³

He then quotes several examples of Ferrarese modes of expression, fitting very badly with the Florentine, and concludes

¹ This is not quite in agreement with what he says in the "Arte della Guerra." "Opere," vol. iv. pp. 282, 283.

² From the examples given by him, it is evident that he quotes from the prose version of the "Suppositi." This makes it probable that the "Dialogue" was written before Ariosto had versified his play, and therefore supports the theory of its being dated before 1512.

³ "Opere," vol. v. p. 19.

by saying that in order to write well we must understand all the properties of the language, and to understand these must study their sources, since otherwise we have a composition in which one part is out of harmony with the other. "Poetry passed from Provence to Sicily, thence to Tuscany, and more especially to Florence, because there the most suitable language was to be found. And now that the language is formed, Ferrarese, Neapolitans, Venetians, are found to write well and to have very apt powers of expression, the which could never have come about had not the great Florentine writers first taught them how to forget the native barbarism, in which they were plunged by reason of their familiar dialect. It must, therefore, be concluded that Italy has no court or common language, because that to which this name has been applied is founded upon the Florentine tongue, to which as to an original source it is necessary to revert; and accordingly even our adversaries, without they be truly stubborn, must acknowledge the tongue to be Florentine."¹

When we consider the condition of philological science among the Italian scholars of that time; when we consider the praise lavished even in our own day upon Leonardo Aretino, merely because he had asserted the existence of a spoken Latin different from the written tongue; and when we remember that Machiavelli was neither a learned man nor a philologist, we must allow that his observations afford additional proofs of his intellectual powers. To assert that the special characteristics of a language do not consist in the greater or lesser number of words which it may have in common with other tongues; but consist in the verb, the only part of speech that really changes in the Italian language which has conjugations but no declensions, is equal to asserting that the special character of a language depends upon its grammar. Now this is the identical idea upon which Frederic Schlegel laid the foundation of comparative philology in 1808. And although it has hitherto escaped notice, the "Dialogo sulla lingua" clearly proves that this idea was first divined by Machiavelli three centuries before.

It is true that in explaining his theories, he frequently says: *certain persons hold (vogliono alcuni)*. This might lead to the supposition that he had borrowed his fundamental idea from others. But it should first be remembered that Machiavelli, as we have seen elsewhere, confessed that he found it expedient to

¹ "Opere," vol. v. p. 21.

make use of this or a like expression, whenever he had to proclaim some very new or daring theory or reflection of his own, the better to attract his readers' attention.¹ Besides, not only, so far as we know, is there no trace, even of the remotest kind, of this idea to be found among the scholars of his time, but almost to the present day it has always been combated in Italy, where the general tendency of philology has been to maintain the contrary doctrine, that the distinctive character of a language is to be sought in its vocabulary. Machiavelli not only started from the opposite principle, but proved it to be his own, by deducing from it very just consequences which were both novel and startling at that day. Certainly the times were not then ripe, nor could he be possessed of the requisite knowledge, for the promotion of the great revolution in science that has only become possible in our own age. Yet even from his secondary observations, and the applications he makes of his idea, it is plain that he had the fullest appreciation of its fecundity and worth. The importance he assigned to accent; his confutation of the hypothesis advanced by Dante, of a court language composed of many dialects, on the ground that it would be a patchwork language with no life in it; his explanation of the mode in which the Florentine speech, while accepting many words belonging to other dialects, assimilated, and made them its own, by subjecting them to its own desinences and special grammatical forms; all this, presented as the logical consequence of his first fundamental idea, is reasoned out in a manner reminding us of the method of a modern philologist. And this furnishes additional proof that, whenever it is a question of discovering the substantial characteristics of social, moral, or intellectual phenomena, and of determining their laws, the genius of Machiavelli is always displayed in its fullest might, and that his vision is not only far-reaching, but piercing deep below the surface of things.

The authenticity of another composition in the form of an epistle, entitled "*Descrizione della Peste di Firenze dell' anno 1527*,"² has been contested with much greater reason, although the theory of its genuineness is supported by the fact that we positively have a copy of it in Machiavelli's handwriting. But this autograph contains additions and corrections from the pen of Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi, to whom the entire "*Descrizione*" is

¹ *Vide* vol. i. p. 468 of this work.

² "*Opere*," vol. v. p. 36.

attributed,¹ according to the notes in another ancient hand at different pages of the manuscript itself. This leads us to suppose that, in the same way that Machiavelli had inserted a copy of the "Commedia in versi," which it is impossible to believe to be his, in this very Codex, he also wrote out a composition of his friend Lorenzo Strozzi, who afterwards revised and corrected it in his own hand. Surely Strozzi would not have dared to add touches of his own to any composition of his celebrated friend? And all uncertainty disappears on the hastiest perusal of this "Descrizione," which could never be imputed to Machiavelli by any one acquainted with his works.

For, even putting aside the fact that 1527 was the year in which Machiavelli died, it is by no means credible that amid the many grave thoughts by which he was at that time overwhelmed, he could have found leisure to employ himself upon a description of the plague. This scourge had begun a few years before, and the manuscript may be incorrectly dated. But how can we suppose that, either in 1527, or some years earlier, Machiavelli could have spoken of marrying again, according to the allusion in the "Descrizione," when it is known that his wife Marietta out-

¹ The Codex containing this autograph is that from which we have often given quotations, and which is described in the pamphlet, "Quarto Centenario," &c., under the heading: "Libro degli autografi Machiavelliani della Magliabecchiana." It was formerly marked among the Magliabechian MSS. by the figures 1451, and in the Strozzi collection as No. 366. It is now preserved among the most valued possessions of the Florence National Library, and is a volume consisting of eight different MSS., of which six are Machiavelli's autographs, including this "Descrizione della Peste." On the first sheet are the words: "Epistola fatta per la peste," and immediately following: "hanc epistolam agit laurentius Philippi stroci, cives florentinus, qui colebant plateam strociorum apud forum, ed est multa plurcha, quia fecit illam Cum magna diligentia et studio temporis et laboris, et ob id laudo illam Cum amiratione ob elegantiam illius, et doctrinam magniam, ô rem inauditam et amirabilem, quod est ista et testor Deum et homines bonos." At the back of sheet 5a the same declaration is repeated in no less strange and incorrect language, apparently almost a first attempt at writing: "Questa Pistola compose Laurentius Philippi Strozi cives florentinus, que colebat plateam strociorum apud forum, et est plurca." Then follows the description of the plague, in Machiavelli's handwriting, with an introductory notice, that has been already published by Polidori and others. This preface is by another hand, and is different from that to be found farther on in the copy by Machiavelli. The "Descrizione" is followed by these words, in the same handwriting as that of the very curious Latinity at the commencement. "Copiata allibro grande nero di Lorenzo alla fini" (then come some doubtful marks, probably indicating the number of the sheet) "et così mi disse." Vide "Opere Minori" di N. Machiavelli, note to p. 415. Florence, Le Monnier, 1852.

lived him. Who, too, would credit him with the authorship of so contorted and pedantic a composition? This, for instance, is its opening period :—

"I dare not place my timid hand on the sheet, to trace this tedious commencement ; indeed, the more do I ponder all these miseries in my head, so much the more do I shrink from the horrible description of them ; and although I have seen everything, to speak of it renews my painful tears ; nor do I know from which side I ought to make a beginning, and were it allowed me, would willingly retreat from this undertaking."¹ It continues in the same strain, and we presently come to the following description of a lady's charms : "Her fresh and delicate flesh was like unto fair ivory, yet so tender and soft as to preserve the traces of even the slightest touch, no less than the yielding and dewy young grass of a verdant meadow preserves the footmarks of slender little animals. But what shall I say of her mellifluous and delicate mouth placed between banks dressed with roses and privet, and wearing so sad an air that I cannot tell how it could chance to shine with so celestial a smile ! The rosy lips over the white and polished teeth seemed like burning rubies and oriental pearls mingled together. She had stolen from Juno the shape of her softly spreading nose, as from Venus her white and well-filled cheeks," &c.²

Then, to mention that a man was seated on the Spini bench, he starts with these words : "And on the nowadays solitary bench of the Spini," &c., &c.,³ the verb only coming in some three or four lines farther on. Accordingly, Macaulay is quite justified in declaring that no external evidence could induce him to think Machiavelli guilty of so detestable a piece of writing, that would scarcely be pardonable as the production of some foolish boy student of rhetoric.⁴

¹ "Opere," vol. v. p. 36. This and nearly the whole of the introduction is in Machiavelli's handwriting. Longer and no less intricate is the other in the same Codex, but by a different hand.

² Ibid., vol. v. pp. 46, 47.

³ Ibid., p. 45.

⁴ "Of this last composition, the strongest external evidence would scarcely induce us to believe him guilty. Nothing was ever written more detestable in matter and manner. The narrations, the reflections, the jokes, the lamentations are all the very worst of their respective kinds. A foolish schoolboy might write such a piece, and after he had written it, think it much finer than the incomparable introduction of the 'Decameron.' But that a shrewd statesman, whose earliest works are characterized by manliness of thought and language, should at near sixty years of age descend to such puerility, is utterly inconceivable."

"Il Dialogo dell'ira e dei modi di curarla," also written in a very contorted style, has never been attributed to Machiavelli, excepting by Poggiali and one or two others. As we have previously said, it is a translation of Plutarch's pamphlet, "On how to avoid anger."¹ Regarding this, too, it will, we think, be enough to quote a few sentences serving to justify the almost unanimous verdict. This is the first sentence: "Rightly it seems to me, dearest Cosimo, do those prudent painters act, who before completely finishing their work, remove it from their sight for some time, in order that, during the interval, the eye, by losing its constant habit of regarding the painting and then beginning to look upon it afresh, may judge of it better and more accurately, and may recognize those defects in it that might otherwise have been hidden from them by continued familiarity."² We cannot think that any one will believe that a period of this kind—positively one of the simplest and least involved of the whole dialogue—could possibly be attributed to Machiavelli.

The famous "Novella di Belfagor arcidiavolo" is undoubtedly his. It has neither much plot, nor much character-painting, and may be described as a witty conceit and pleasantry of the kind often found among our Italian *novelle*. When Pluto noticed that all who arrived in Hell agreed in complaints against their wives, to whom they attributed their perdition, he assembled his counsellors, and it was decided to investigate the truth of the matter. For this purpose the arch-fiend Belphegor was despatched to earth in human shape, with one hundred thousand ducats in his pocket, to seek himself a wife. Coming to Florence he there married a certain Onesta, daughter of Amerigo Donati; and speedily by her

(Macaulay's "Essays," vol. i. p. 89). By these words Macaulay shows much greater accuracy of judgment and literary taste than Leo, who harps upon the "Descrizione della Peste" in order to say harsh things of Machiavelli's moral character: "Wie leicht Machiavelli mit dem Tode umspringt, und wie er alles, was anderen schrecklich ist, mit der grössten Anmuth zu verhöhnen weiss, sieht man recht gut aus der satyrischen Erzählung einer fingirten Heirath während der Pest im Jahr 1527 in Florenz; es enthält diese Erzählung Zugleich in jeder Zeile Beweise wie Machiavelli zu einer Zeit, wo ihn überall Unglück umgab, und kaum vier Wochen vor seinem eignen Tode (also nicht mehr bei jungen Jahren) seine Phantasie noch voll Bilder weiblicher Schönheit und sinnlicher Verhältnisse zu Weibern hatte." *Vide* the preface frequently quoted by us, of Leo's German translation of the letters of Machiavelli, p. xiv note.

¹ In vol. i. of this translation, p. 241 note; and Appendix (II.) of Italian edition, document xviii.

² "Opere Minori," Florence, Le Monnier, 1852, p. 626.

pride, and extravagance, her habits and her relations, found himself reduced to poverty and despair. And the devils he had brought with him as attendants were positively glad to return to the flames of the infernal regions. Belphagor himself was so persecuted by his creditors that at last he was obliged to avoid imprisonment by flight. Being pursued by a mob of creditors, magistrates and roughs, he was concealed and rescued by a peasant, on whom, in his gratitude, he promised to bestow vast riches in the following way. Whenever the peasant should hear of any woman possessed by an evil spirit, he was to go to exorcise it, for then he, Belphagor, would immediately quit the woman's body, so that his deliverer might earn his reward. And on two occasions the peasant followed this advice much to his own profit. But the second time, the fiend, who had entered into the daughter of the King of Naples, said to him, Take care that this be the last time you come to turn me out ; for if you try to do it again, you will bitterly repent it. So the peasant having received fifty thousand ducats from the king, and being well content with his gains, determined to go home and live quietly. But the fame of his mysterious power having spread everywhere, and the daughter of the French king Louis VII. being likewise possessed, that monarch sought his help, and would take no refusal. Accordingly, the peasant was obliged to use his power for the third time. But no sooner did he go near the princess, than the fiend reminded him of his warning, and threatened to make him repent if he did not instantly go away. On the other hand, the king would hear no reason, and threatened him with death. Thus placed between hammer and anvil, the peasant resorted to craft. He ordered the erection of a great wooden stand in the square of *Nôtre Dame*, upon which all the great lords and prelates of the kingdom were to be assembled. There was to be an altar in the centre of the square, and the princess was to be led up to it after Mass had been celebrated. In one corner there was to be a band of at least twenty persons, furnished with trumpets, horns, drums, pipes and other very noisy instruments, and the players were to rush towards the altar, playing as loudly as possible the moment the peasant gave the signal by waving his hat in the air. All was ready ; the dignitaries were on the stand, the square thronged with people, mass had been performed, and the princess stood before the altar. Belphagor, meanwhile, was showering threats on the peasant, again warning him that if he did not instantly go

away something very terrible would happen to him. But the man only replied by waving his hat on high, and instantly the band advanced making a tremendous noise with their instruments. The fiend, startled by the unexpected clamour, cried out: "What does this mean?" "Alas, alas!" replied the peasant, "here is your wife coming to fetch you." At this news Belpagor stayed to hear no more, scampered back to Hell at the top of his speed, and ever after testified to the perils and tribulations of the married state.¹

Some writers have pretended that Machiavelli designed this pleasant fable as an allusion to the sufferings inflicted upon him by his wife Marietta; but all the best-known facts and most authentic documents clearly prove the falsity of this assertion. Marietta, as we have seen, was a good wife to him, and her husband deserved more reproof from her, than she from him.² Others have pretended that Machiavelli was not the author of this tale, because another and but slightly different version was brought out under the name of Monsignore Giovanni Brevio in the year 1545. In 1549, however, the printers Giunti republished it in its original form, with Machiavelli's name on the title page and a declaration to the effect that "in this way they vindicated the rights of its creator, which had been usurped by a person desirous of enjoying the honour of another's toil."³ The original manuscript of the tale was afterwards discovered in the Florence National Library,⁴ and this put an end to dispute, since the intrinsic tests of style and diction were all in favour of Machiavelli. The theme of its Belpagor was not of his own invention, for it is to be found in the "Forty Viziers," a Turkish book taken from an Arabian source, derived in its turn from an

¹ "Opere," vol. v. p. 22 and fol.

² *Vide*, among other proofs, an essay by Innocenzio Giampieri on "Niccolò Machiavelli and Marietta Corsini," in the volume entitled: "Monumenti del Giardino Puccini," pp. 275-290. Pistoia, the Cino Press, 1845.

³ On a copy of Giunti's edition, is the following inscription in the handwriting of Magliabechi: "This tale by Niccolò Machiavelli is included among those of Brevio, and also in part ii. of Doni's Libreria, and in canto iii. of the very nonsensical tragi-comic poem Tristarello, and in Sansovino's collection of tales. In Machiavelli's original copy kindly presented to me by Signor Benvenuti, there are several very interesting variations." Signor Gargani republished a small edition of thirty numbered copies from the autograph manuscript, and eight copies bearing his name. (Florence, Dotti, 1869.) Gargani's preface contains several items of information respecting the tale.

⁴ Class vii. No. 335.

Indian original.¹ Therefore it came to Italy from the East, by oral tradition if not indeed in a written form, and was picked up by Machiavelli. It was afterwards borrowed by Brevio, Doni, Sansovino, and others, among whom we must not forget to include La Fontaine, who was more successful in his imitation of it, than in his other tale borrowed from "La Mandragola." We have also learnt that a tale much resembling Belphegor is a popular story at the present day even among the Southern Slaves.²

We need only record the titles of a few other short compositions, of little or no importance. The "*Capitoli per una bizzarra compagnia*"³ is merely a laughable trifle. The "*Allocuzione fatta da un magistrato nell' ingresso dell' ufficio*" (a magistrate's inaugural address on taking office)⁴ consists only of a few general remarks on justice, with regard to the public welfare, together with a long extract from the "*Divina Commedia*" on the same subject. It reads like a roughly sketched beginning to some literary exercise. There is little more to be said of the "*Discorso Morale*,"⁵ which seems to have been written for recital at some meeting of one of the religious confraternities abounding in Florence at that time, and treats with much unction, and a certain tinge of veiled irony, of the duties and advantages of charity to our neighbours and obedience to the Almighty. It has no further claim upon our attention.

¹ Artaud, "*Machiavelli, son génie et ses erreurs*," vol. ii. p. 94. We believe this author to have been the first to observe that this tale was to be found in the "*Quaranta Visiri*," which he had read in Gauthier's translation. And Professor Fausto Lasinio considers that Belphegor was imported into Italy in the "*Quaranta Visiri*."

² Prof. L. Macun, "*Niccolò Machiavelli als Dichter, Historiker und Staatsmann*." This is an address published on the occasion of the third centenary of the Gymnasium of Gratz. In note 2, at page 11, the author says: "Merkwürdig ist diese Novelle für die Sudslaven dadurch, dass sie dort im Volke selbst landläufig ist, wie man aus Stojanovics's '*Puc'ke pripovedke*,' S. 133, '*Zla z'ena* ('*Racconti popolari—Della cattiva moglie*') ersehen kann." The author then inquires, how the tale could have penetrated to that part of the world? It may be replied that the fact is easily explainable by the eastern origin of the story.

³ "*Opere*," vol. v. p. 51. ⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. v. p. 57. ⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. v. p. 61.



FRONTISPICE

to the History of Francesco Sforza by Giovanni Simonetta



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FRONTISPIECE

In the History of Francesco Sforza by Giovanni Simonetta



CHAPTER XII.

FLORENTINE HISTORIANS.

"The Florentine Histories"—Book first, or the general introduction.



AT the time that Machiavelli began to write his Histories, there were two schools of historians in Florence, namely, those still following in the track of Villani, and the Learned men, pursuing a totally different road. Numbers of chronicles, annals, *prioristi*, and diaries were then written, recording events as they happened day by day; and in certain Tuscan households the custom has been maintained, even to the present time. But during the period of which we write, no works of this description succeeded in achieving a deserved literary fame. The "Tumulto dei Ciompi" of Gino Capponi, the "Istorie" of Giovanni Cambi, the "Diario" of Biagio Buonaccorsi, and many other similar compositions, are certainly precious stores of information, but of very slight value as works of art. Accordingly, the men of learning had stood for some time in the first rank, and having thrown the chroniclers into the shade and found imitators in all parts of Italy, no one but the small fry and those who were not *litterati* by profession, dared any longer to follow in the old course. In Florence Leonardo Aretino and Poggio Bracciolini had been the chief representatives of the school of learned historians, and their fame was still very great and widespread. As we have noted elsewhere,¹ their works were written in

¹ We have alluded to this in "Introduction," vol. i. of this work, p. 94 and fol.

Ciceronian Latin, and not satisfied with recording events in the order of occurrence from day to day, they tried to group them skilfully after the manner of their usual model, Titus Livy. They despised chronicles, because they aspired to the classic dignity of history, but their interpretation of such dignity consisted in magnifying the events they narrated, and transforming the smallest Florentine street riots into tremendous conflicts. Their personages were always draped in the Roman *toga*, always uttered solemn speeches. Aretino applied himself to writing, "because the glorious deeds of the Florentine people deserve transmission to posterity, and their war with Pisa may be compared to that of the Romans with Carthage. But the difficulty of the enterprise arouses the writer's alarm, and above all the roughness of modern names, upon which it is impossible to confer any elegance."¹ Accordingly, Aretino's "History," like those of the learned men in general, is void of all local colour, all spontaneous movement, and as a source of genuine information is inferior not only to the Chronicles of the Trecento, but even to later histories of altogether slighter merit.

In reading the histories of Aretino and Bracciolini, no one could suppose that both these writers had spent many years in Florence, and been secretaries of the Republic. They give no anecdotes, no colouring of time or place, no portraits from life. Yet even in these works the Humanists show certain distinguishing merits of their own. It is true that they grouped their facts in a purely literary way, for, whether consciously or unconsciously, eloquence was their sole aim, and they were still faithful to the division of history by years, after the fashion of the old chroniclers, just as though each year necessarily formed a separate period. Nevertheless, this extrinsic exterior unity served later to open the way to the intrinsic unity of the logical connection of facts; and although it must be confessed that the Humanists never attained to this point, they instinctively aimed at it. Occasionally Aretino says so clearly enough, for he even declares his intention of explaining "the causes of events, and delivering judgment on things past and gone."² And to this merit was added

¹ "Nominumque denique asperitas, vix cuius cumque elegantiae patiens." Leonardo Aretino, "Istoria fiorentina tradotta in volgare" by Donato Acciajoli, "col testo a fronte," vol. i. p. 62. Florence, Le Monnier, 3 vols., 1856, 1858, 1860. In 1861, the same publisher issued the translation in separate form, in a 12mo vol. of his "Biblioteca Nazionale." ² L. Aretino, "Istorie," *loc. cit.*

that of critical inquiry, which was certainly initiated by the Humanists.

Unsatisfied with the plain narration of contemporary events, and wishing to embrace a much vaster field, they were compelled to employ research, and ended by weighing and comparing their sources of information. We already know that Flavio Biondi was the first and most successful of these men, as being the real inaugurator of historic criticism, while others were laying the foundations of philosophical and philological criticism. He not only examined and discussed the amount of credence to be assigned to the authorities consulted by him ; but even in relating contemporary facts gleaned from eye-witnesses, was careful to examine whether such witnesses were in a position to know the truth and to chronicle it faithfully. He sometimes shows wonderful penetration, in extracting, even from the study of a popular saying, proofs of the credibility of certain historic facts.¹ Criticism seemed a spontaneous growth in those days, and the writers who first essayed it were barely aware of what they were undertaking. We see that Aretino put aside all the current and fabulous traditions concerning the origin of Florence, and sought its primitive history in such information as could be gleaned from classic authors regarding the Etruscans, and the colonies planted by the Romans in Tuscany. Further on, in a brief sketch of the general history of the Middle Ages, he attempted to collect some confused notices on the origin of the Communes. All this constitutes his first book. In the second book he begins the special history of Florence and carries it on through eleven others down to the commencement of the fifteenth century. But this part of his work is devoid of any original research or novel information ; everything is sacrificed to classicality of form, and the internal events of the Republic are neglected for the sake of pompous periods in honour of its military enterprises. Bracciolini did the same, for after rapidly tracing in six or seven pages the history of the Republic down to 1350, he slackens his pace, and devotes himself solely to a magniloquent account

¹ Some new monographs on Flavio Biondo have been recently published : "Flavio Biondo sein Leben und seine Werke" : Inaugural Dissertation von Alfred Masius. Leipzig, Teubner, 1879 ; P. Buchholz, "Die Quellen der Historiarum Decades des Flavii Blondus !" Inaugural Dissertation, Naumburg, Sieling, 1881. And some important notices upon the same author by A. Wielmanns appear in the "Göttingische gelehrten Anzeigen" of 1879.

of campaigns which, in these pages, assume the proportions of the wars of ancient Rome.¹ He writes with less critical power and more haste than Aretino, but also with greater vivacity and an easier Latin style. This latter merit sufficed to make his book more popular among his contemporaries.

But learned history, too, was on the decline in Machiavelli's day. Aretino and Bracciolini, who had given it renown, were already of a past generation. The Italian tongue being now held in esteem, Italian ambassadors and statesmen having entered upon serious and persevering study of political events, a different treatment of history was demanded. It had now to be written in the national idiom, to be eloquent, lively, and founded on study of reality, on knowledge of human nature and of the true causes of facts that must have some logical connection. It was, in short, the modern form of history, as sought by us all even at the present day, and then on the point of coming into existence. For this reason, when the friends of Machiavelli discovered the new historic style in his "*Vita di Castruccio Castracani*," they were prodigal of their praise and encouraged him by all means to pursue that branch of composition. It should not, however, be forgotten that Guicciardini had already written the "*Storia Fiorentina*," of which we have made mention. And although this was only a juvenile work, left unpublished until our own day and unknown to all in his own times, yet it has the substantial characteristics of the civil and modern history that was one of the most original creations of the Italians of the Renaissance. It is only in the limitation of his narrative to almost exclusively contemporary events, and his partial adherence to the old division by years, that his work shows any lingering trace of connection with the old-fashioned chronicles or annals. For his narrative shows marvellous graphic power and precision, as well as great accuracy of research from original documents. His logical connection of events, analysis of the nature of politicians, exact description of parties and personal ambitions, and above all of the action exercised upon events by

¹ To give an idea of the scanty attention accorded by him to internal events, this is how he speaks of the very serious revolt known as the "*Tumulto dei Ciompi*": "*Quieta ab externis bellis civitate, pax in dissensiones domesticas versa est. Nam civiles discordiæ e vestigio civitatem invasere: quæ pestis omni externa bello perniciosior est; ide enim et rerum publicarum interitus et urbium sequitur eversis.*" And this is all that he says on the subject. Poggii, "*Historia Fiorentina*," p. 78. Venetiis, Hertz, 1715.

princes, party-leaders, and popular passions, give this history an essentially original and modern character.

Machiavelli entirely broke away from the chronicle form. Yet he was unacquainted with Guicciardini's juvenile work. For its author, being overwhelmed with business, thought it of little importance, and seems to have kept it almost concealed. When commissioned, through the intervention of Cardinal dei Medici, to write a history of Florence, Machiavelli determined to begin his narrative from the year 1434. That was the year in which *Cosimo il Vecchio* returned from exile practically a potentate, and the power of the Medici was at last consolidated. The events of preceding times had been already treated by Aretino and Bracciolini, "*two most excellent historians.*"¹ He was, however, speedily obliged to recognize that they had only spoken of external wars, while regarding civil dissensions, internal enmities and their effects, they had either preserved total silence or merely made a few casual remarks. And this was their mistake, since no lesson can be more useful to rulers than that which teaches the *causes* of enmities and factions, especially in a city such as Florence, where factions were of infinite number, brought about exile, death and devastation, and yet instead of hindering the prosperity of the Republic, seemed on the contrary to augment it.

This, then, was the lesson Machiavelli proposed to teach, and his promise was not confined to empty words as in Aretino's history, but was the leading idea permeating his whole work, constituting its character, demonstrating its great originality, and rendering its author the real originator of civil and political history.

The work is divided into eight books, forming three parts, kept very distinct one from the other. The first is a general introduction to the history of the Middle Ages for the purpose of inquiring into the historical origin of the Commune, and forming a clear idea of the new civilization that arose after the fall of the Roman Empire. This book, starting from the barbarian invasions, extends to the first years of the fifteenth century, and may be regarded as a separate work. The three following books are devoted to the civil and internal history of Florence, from its origin down to Cosimo's return in 1434. The last four carry on the narrative from that date down to 1492, the year of the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent. And at this point the author again

¹ Proem to the "*Istorie Fiorentine, Opere,*" vol. i. p. cli.

changes his method, seemingly unwilling to dwell upon internal vicissitudes of the Republic, which would have obliged him to give a minute account of the destruction of liberty by the Medici. For as Machiavelli wrote by command of Cardinal dei Medici, to whom, when Pope, the work was afterwards dedicated, he was naturally obliged to avoid a theme that he was neither able nor willing to treat with the stony impassibility shown in Guicciardini's "*Storia Fiorentina*." He therefore dwelt chiefly on the external wars carried on during those years by the captains of adventure, and was thus able to demonstrate their hurtfulness, the inefficiency of their troops, and the dangers they entailed upon the Italian States. Then follow the "*Frammenti storici*," intended to constitute the ninth book, which was left incomplete.

The first book has been much praised and indeed extolled by the critics. The idea of narrating for the first time, in broad outline, the general history of the Middle Ages, was regarded by them as a new and original conception; they even sought to attribute great learning to this work, and a novel and exact method of arrangement giving prominence to all leading facts, and leaving aside secondary matters, so that, in their opinion, from Machiavelli's day to our own, it has always been necessary to imitate him in these respects.¹ But to put things on a right footing, we must start by remembering that there was nothing new in the idea of a general history of the Middle Ages. Flavio Biondo had already written a similar history on a large scale, and later Leonardo Aretino had made it the principal theme of his first book, as was afterwards done by Machiavelli. Also as regards the latter's erudition, it must be admitted that he derived it entirely from Biondo, often giving a summary and sometimes literal translation of his work.² Many errors of fact were merely

¹ "Machiavelli hat in diesem ersten Abschnitte, der gleichsam eine Einleitung in die florentinische Specialgeschichte bildet, die Epochen der italienischen Geschichte bis zum xv. Jahrhundert hin so geschieden, dass seitdem keiner seine Spur verlassen konnte, ohne sogleich Mangel an Einsicht in die Sache zu verrathen." This is the opinion expressed by Gervinus in his "*Historische Schriften*," p. 165.

² Blondi Flavii forliviensis, "*Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum*," libri xxxi. Basillae, ex officina Frobeniana, 1531. As to the name of this writer, called by some Biondo Flavio, and by others Flavio Biondo, the reasons leading to the use of both forms may be found in the previously quoted work of Masius.

I should also observe that a compendium of Flavio Biondo's history was made by Pope Pius II., and was afterwards translated into Italian: "*Abreviatio Pii II. Pont. max, supra Decades Blondi ab inclinatione imperii usque ad tempora*

transferred from the earlier to the later work, and Machiavelli also borrowed from the same source all that was best in his general arrangement of materials, which at other times he often threw into wilful and unnecessary confusion. Nevertheless, having to compress into sixty octavo pages the entire contents of an enormous folio, it was impossible for him to produce a very exact imitation. Besides, in Machiavelli's work we meet with a new conception of general politics, far above the capacity of Biondo, permeating the whole of this first book, and endowing it, as we shall see, with a special value of its own. But first let us speak of its imitative points.

After a few brief remarks on the invasions of the barbarians in general, Machiavelli says that after the repulse of the Cimbri by Marius, the Visigoths were the next invaders, and were so thoroughly routed by Theodosius that they submitted to his sway and served under his banners. But when at his decease he was succeeded by his sons, Arcadius and Honorius, these were advised by Stilicho to refuse payment to the Visigoths: whereupon the latter, for the sake of revenge, chose Alaric for their king, and attacked and pillaged Rome. All this narrative is imitated from Biondo, and its concluding part is almost a literal translation.¹ It continues in the same way. The account of the passage of the Vandals into Africa at the summons of Bonifacius, who governed there in the name of the empire, is likewise copied from Biondo. The curious and erroneous notices upon England were also derived by Machiavelli from the same source. The portrait of

Joannis vicesimi tertii Pont. maxi." Venetiis per Thomam Alexandrinum, anno salutis MCCCCLXXXIII. iiii. kalendas iulii. "Le historie del Biondo da la declination de l'imperio di Roma insino al tempo suo (che vi corsero circa mille anni), ridotte in compendio da Papa Pio, e tradotte per Lucio Fauno in buona lingua volgare," vol. i., Venice, 1543; vol. ii., Venice, per Michel Tromezino, 1550. This is the edition in the National Library at Florence.

It naturally occurred to us that, to save time and trouble, Machiavelli might have made use of this compendium in his epitome of Biondo's narrative; but careful examination compelled us to recognize that on the contrary he had worked from the original. Many expressions and sometimes whole periods existing in Biondo's work, and that are omitted in the compendium of Pius II., reappear in Machiavelli, thus dispelling all doubt. For that reason we will cite a few of the fragments borrowed by Machiavelli.

¹ Compare "Opere," vol. i. pp. 2, 3; Blondi, "Historiarum," &c., pp. 7, 8; "Opere," vol. i. pp. 4, 5; Blondi, "Historiarum," &c., pp. 20, 21; "Opere," vol. i. pp. 45, 46; Blondi, "Historiarum," p. 31; "Opere," vol. i. p. 13; Blondi, "Historiarum," pp. 101, 102; "Opere," vol. i. p. 13; Blondi, "Historiarum," pp. 98, 99.

Theodoric is more original ; nevertheless, occasional sentences betray that in penning this description the author had not entirely forgotten to refer to Biondo's work. He relies still more upon it in speaking of the Longobards, and follows it closely in treating of the Greeks, and especially of Narsetes and Longinus. At points where the very devout Biondo indulged in lengthy passages on the popes and their history, Machiavelli ceases to follow him, relates but few events, and indulges instead in many reflections of his own. But when he speaks of the Communes, we again come upon traces of the parent author. And the same occurs wherever there is simple narrative without any theoretical reflections. For these latter were always Machiavelli's own, neither copied, nor imitated from any source. Even the account of the origin of Venice, so highly extolled for its eloquence, and showing all the distinctive qualities of Machiavelli's style, seems to have been mainly derived from the same model. Comparison of the two writers will suffice to prove the truth of all that we have said.

Nor can it be allowed that Machiavelli deserves the farther praise accorded to him on the score of his logical co-ordination of events, his division of them into principal and secondary, and his dwelling on the former while hastily skimming the latter. We find on the contrary, that instead of an objective arrangement of his facts, he disposed them according to a fixed idea, to which he sometimes forced them to conform. And it is quite clear that the events he dwells upon at greatest length are not those of the highest intrinsic importance, but rather those throwing the best light upon his leading idea, for he often shows the strangest neglect of everything unadapted to that end. Indeed, both the merits and defects of the work now under examination are directly traceable to its author's ruling idea. Few words are needed to show in what that idea consisted. It will offer itself spontaneously to our view, as soon as we begin a rapid and summary review of the book.

After alluding to the earlier Germanic invasions, their causes and origin, Machiavelli pauses to give a hasty account of the capture and sack of Rome by Alaric and his Visigoths ; of the irruptions of the Huns under Attila, and of the Vandals led by Genseric, and then proceeds to the invasion of Odoacer, King of the Eruli, who, "quitting his dominions on the Danube, assumed the title of King of Rome, and was the first of the popular chieftains

then ravaging the world, to make a settled abode in Italy."¹ But he passes rapidly over this part of his work. The first figure that he stays to contemplate and describe with special interest, placing it in high relief, and towering like a giant over the beginning of his narrative, is that of Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths, who after vanquishing Odoacer succeeded to his throne with the title of King of Italy, and tried to reduce the country to order by preserving and restoring Roman institutions. At this point Machiavelli is fired with enthusiasm; he cannot hurry on at his usual pace, when met, as it were, on the threshold of his history by a true and genuine presentment of the Prince-reformer, that was his life-long ideal. Accordingly he was instantly fascinated by Theodoric. And the better to make the real character he describes correspond with his ideal hero, he is careful, while always following the lines of Biondo's work, to omit or attenuate certain details reminding us too clearly that the real individual in question was a barbarian conqueror instead of a deliverer. Thus, where Biondo states that Theodoric not only prevented all Romans and Italians from entering the army, and even from bearing weapons, Machiavelli says "he enlarged Ravenna, restored Rome, and save in the matter of military discipline, gave back every other honour to the Romans."² He concludes by remarking that had not his numerous virtues, both in peace and war, been stained by certain cruelties towards the end of his life, as for instance by the murder of Boetius and of Symmachus, his memory would be deserving in all respects of the highest honour. "By means of his virtue and goodness, not Rome and Italy alone, but all other parts of the Western Empire being freed from the continual shocks endured for so many years from many barbarian invasions, were now relieved and restored to good order and exceeding prosperity."³ And hereupon, for the sake of giving added greatness and lustre to the figure of his hero, Machiavelli digresses into an eloquent

¹ "Opere," vol. i. p. 7. Sometimes even the simplest phrases of this first book remind us of Biondo: "Sed jam ad barbarorum regem qui primus Romam et Italiam possedit, revertamur" (Blondii Flavii, "Historiarum," &c., p. 31).

² Biondo, having mentioned that Theodoric restored the monuments and institutions of the Romans, goes on to say: "Prohibuit autem edicto et curam impendit attentioem, ne quis Romanus aut paterna origine Italus, nedum militaret, sed arma domi haberet" (Biondo, *op. cit.* p. 34). We should also note, that this passage of Biondo, partly reproduced, if in a changed form, by Machiavelli, is altogether absent from the compendium by Pius II.

³ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 8, 9.

description of all the woes and calamities, which Italy had endured before Theodoric's time, namely, under Arcadius and Honorius. "Laws, manners, and languages had been changed," he tells us: "many cities destroyed and others founded, any one of the which things, much less all together, or even the mere thought of them, much less the sight and suffering of them, would be enough to terrify even the firmest and most constant mind. . . . Amid so many changes, not the least in importance was the change of religion, since in the conflict between the habits of the old faith and the miracles of the new, very grave tumults and disputes arose among men." "Not only was the old religion at war with the new, but the Christian faith being divided and sub-divided into various sects and Churches, was lacerated internally." "Therefore, being compassed about by so much persecution, men bore their inward terror stamped on their features, since besides the infinite ills they had to endure, the greater number of them—unable even to cast themselves on the mercy of God, in whom all the wretched are accustomed to place their hopes—inasmuch as the majority were uncertain from what Divinity to implore aid, died a miserable death deprived of all succour or consolation. Therefore Theodoric deserved no slight praise, as the first to make all these evils subside, so that during the thirty-eight years of his reign in Italy, he restored it to so much greatness, that no traces of the old sufferings were any longer to be seen."¹ Here the extent of the writer's enthusiasm is revealed by the rising eloquence of his style.

The death of Theodoric is followed by the dominion of the Greeks through the conquests of Belisarius and Narsetes. Then the latter, roused to indignation against the Grecian Emperor, summoned the Longobards, who became the rulers of Italy. Instead of uniting the country, they divided it into thirty dukedoms, and were thus not only prevented from establishing their sway over the whole of it, but gave the popes occasion to acquire increasing prominence, and govern the country at their will by fostering its divisions. In fact, when the pontiffs perceived that, notwithstanding their stratagems, they were at the mercy of the Longobards, and might no longer hope for assistance from the Grecian Emperor, whose power had declined, they called the Franks into Italy." "Accordingly, all the wars made by the barbarians upon Italy in these times were chiefly promoted by the

¹ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 9-11.

popes, and nearly all the barbaric hordes that swept over the land had come at their call. The which course of proceeding is still pursued in our own day, and has kept and still keeps Italy disunited and defenceless. Therefore, in describing the events which have occurred from those times to the present, we shall no longer have to relate the fall of the empire, which has been cast down, but the rise of the pontiffs and of those other princes who then ruled in Italy until the coming of Charles VIII. And it will be shown how the popes, first by their edicts, then by these and force of arms, combined with indulgences, commanded both terror and respect; and how by their evil use of either attribute, they have lost the former, and only maintain the latter at the pleasure of others." *

This is the second idea continually prominent throughout the first book of the "Storie." On the one hand the Prince-reformer, who seeks to re-unite Italy, relieve her from miseries and woes and give her happiness; on the other the popes, who, to maintain their own power, keep the country divided, plunge it in desolation, and are therefore the objects of Machiavelli's hatred. All this is urged and reiterated by him both with force and eloquence in a book written by command of and dedicated to a Pope. Such was the Machiavelli, depicted to us as cunning, dissimulating, and false. On the contrary, at all moments, no matter to whom he addressed himself, nor to what extent his words might be offensive to his listeners or injurious to himself, he was never able either to hide or modify his scientific and political conceptions. Not even in the present instance, when he required the Pope's help for the continuation of the work he had begun at his request. Fortunately, the temper of the times was favourable to him, since it granted ample liberty of thought and speech on all similar topics. And, in fact, Clement VII. was by no means offended by the freedom and severity of his language.

At any rate, Machiavelli continued his narrative in the same relentless tone, relating how the Franks came when summoned, and made the famous concessions which established the foundation of the temporal power of the Popes. Charlemagne was consecrated Emperor by the Lord's anointed, to whom he had given fresh power over the earth. On his death, the empire, being first divided among his sons, was transferred to Germany, and Italy traversed a period of the utmost disorder, during which various

* Vol. i. p. 18.

attempts were made to create a national monarchy. These attempts, however, were not only abortive, but ended by subjecting Italy to the sway of the Othos, under whose rule, at a later date, the Communes began to arise. Meanwhile, the Popes, always faithful to their traditions, always covetous of authority and power, first deprived the Roman people of their right of acclaiming the Emperor, then of that of electing the Head of the Church, and finally set them the example of deposing an emperor. Thereupon some sided with the Empire, others with the Papacy, "thus sowing the seed of the Guelph and Ghibelline humours, so that, as soon as Italy were freed from barbarian invasions, it might be torn by internal struggles."¹

In treating of the mighty conflict between the Papacy and the Empire, begun by Emperor Henry II. and Pope Alexander II., and continued under Gregory VII., Machiavelli supplies hardly any details; he does not even mention the great Pope by name, but dilates in general terms upon the haughtiness, pertinacity, and good fortune of the popes; and how, after the humiliation inflicted by them on the Emperor at Canossa, they found new allies in the Normans, who had founded the kingdom of Naples, and were very obsequious to the Church. The popes, however, he says, were not satisfied even then, but always scheming new undertakings. Urban II., being detested in Rome, and not deeming that the divisions of Italy sufficiently ensured his safety, had recourse to a noble idea. He went to France to preach a crusade against the Infidels, and so greatly inflamed the minds of men, that the campaign in Asia against the Saracens was decreed, "and many kings and many peoples helped on the enterprise with gold, and many private individuals fought in it without any recompense. So great was then the power of religion over the minds of men, stirred by the example of those that were at its head."²

And if the will of a Pope was the sole origin of the Crusades, the general and multiple consequences of that mighty event were all reduced, according to Machiavelli, to the institution of the order of the Knights Templars, the Knights of Jerusalem, and a few conquests in the East. "At various times there occurred sundry vicissitudes, in which many nations and special individuals acquired celebrity."³ This is all that he says.

At this point another consideration presents itself. Not the

¹ "Opere," vol. i. p. 25.

² Ibid., pp. 27, 28.

³ Ibid., p. 28.

Crusades only, but all the greatest historical events, have in Machiavelli's eyes none but an individual and personal cause. The Visigoths under Alaric came into Italy through the treason of Stilicho; the Vandals crossed from Spain to Africa at the summons of Bonifacius, of whom Etius had caused the destitution, and they entered Italy at the call of Eudoxia, who sought for revenge; the Longobards came because Narsetes persuaded their king Alboin to essay the new enterprise, and so likewise the Crusades were provoked and started almost by mere caprice on the part of Urban II. The general, impersonal causes and consequences of all these events are altogether absent from Machiavelli's history. If he concerns himself with religion, it must be in the shape of an institution, a Church, or personified in the Pope; he cannot concern himself with the progress of civilization unless it assume the form of law, State, government, or of some great political character. And as in the "Prince" and the "Discourses," he confers unbounded power upon his legislator, making him capable of establishing or destroying a Republic, a monarchy, any kind of government at his own free will, so in this history he regards individual resolve, energy, and intelligence as the sole causes of all the greatest events. And the great men promoting such events are neither formed, inspired, nor endowed with strength by the people; but, on the contrary, it is they who impose their will upon the people, and imbue it with their own ideas. This is the key unlocking to us at the same time the secret both of his historical and political system. It is true that the mediæval legend had already devised similar personal explanations of historical facts. But, to the Middle Ages, man always seemed a blind agent in the hands of Providence, that alike guided peoples and captains, emperors and popes. With the humanists of the fifteenth century, Providence disappeared from the pages of history, and legends were transformed into exclusively personal explanations. There is an abundance of these in the work of Biondo that Machiavelli had under his eyes; but it was the latter's part to weave them together into a regular system of history, to serve as the basis of his political system. Both therefore are derived from the same source, namely, from the same method of regarding mankind and society: they almost constitute the two aspects in which his conception appears to us, according to our point of view. Like his political writings, his history has but little to tell us either of manners, letters, arts,

commerce, or religion. It treats only of conquerors and conquered, of the means by which victory is secured, and of the causes leading to defeat; but most of all it treats of States and their founders, of those that alter and those that destroy them. All other problems, activities, and considerations are almost indifferent to him.

Carrying on his narrative, Machiavelli touches very lightly upon the conflict of the Communes with Frederic Barbarossa, and on the assistance then furnished them by the Pope. On the other hand he devotes more space to an account of the reprimand inflicted by Pope Alexander III. on King Henry of England, "a reprimand to which no private person of our own time would consent to submit."¹ He then recurs to the subject of the accustomed wiles of the popes, relating how, on the extinction of the Norman line in Naples, being unable to seize the kingdom for themselves, they caused it to be occupied by the Hohenstauffen. And after speaking of Frederic II., without saying a word of the important part played by him as a promoter of culture, he dwells upon the fact that the popes, with their constant restlessness and jealousy, summoned Charles of Anjou to make war upon that emperor's descendants, and gave him the investiture of the kingdom. But when Charles, after his victories in the field, was also made a Roman Senator, they found his power too great, and quickly stirred the Emperor Rudolph to arms against him.

"In this way the pontiffs, now in the cause of religion, now in that of their own ambition, never desisted from exciting fresh feuds in Italy and arousing new wars; and no sooner did they establish the power of any prince, than they repented of it and sought to compass his downfall, nor would they permit that any province which they were too weak to seize, should be possessed by another. And princes trembled, for, whether by fight or flight, the popes were always the victors."² The popes degenerated in all things, owing to their immoderate ambition. Nicholas III. (1277-81) was the first to inaugurate nepotism, and his successors quickly exceeded all bounds even in that.

"Hence, just as in these former times there has never been any mention of the nephews or kinsmen of any pontiff, so from this time forward history will be found to be so crowded with them that we shall soon have to speak of the sons of popes, for indeed

¹ "Opere," vol. i. p. 31.

² Ibid., vol. i. p. 37.

but one thing now remains for these latter to attempt, namely, that after having hitherto sought to bequeath principedoms to their sons, they should now seek in future to leave them heirs to the Papacy." ¹

Soon, their ambition swelled to such enormous dimensions, that Boniface VIII. turned his spiritual as well as temporal weapons against his enemies the Colonna. "The which, while working some injury to them (the Colonna), wrought far more to the Church, since those weapons once virtuously employed in the cause of faith, began to lose their edge, when turned against Christians from motives of personal ambition. And thus from undue craving to satisfy their appetites the pontiffs gradually found themselves stripped of their arms." ²

Other political events, even when of serious importance, as for example, the Sicilian Vespers, the strife of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, and the vicissitudes of the kingdom of Naples, are barely touched upon, while there is continual mention of every fact in any way tending to justify the political sympathies or antipathies of the author, or to support his theories. We are thus shown with increasing clearness, that Machiavelli aimed at no objective arrangement of facts in accordance with their intrinsic value, and certainly achieved none. On the contrary, his constant object was to find in history the corroboration of his own scheme of politics; and this was no very difficult task, seeing that he had first derived it from history, and was not over scrupulous as to exactness of detail. He passes very lightly over the Italian journey of Henry VII. and the numerous consequences resulting therefrom, and indulges in a far longer description of the perfidious wiles and stratagems by which the Visconti, and Matteo in particular, gained possession of Milan and expelled the Della Torre. He gives his own colouring to these events, in which he again traces the arts of the adventurer-prince, a theme of which he is never weary. Farther on, after the recital of other occurrences, Machiavelli, without any apparent motive, suddenly goes a long way back, to describe the origin of Venice. He then meets with another personage demanding his attention, and this is the tribune Cola di Rienzo, who, had he ended as he had begun, would have been another of his most dearly admired characters. In fact, he at first speaks of him with enthusiasm, but quickly turns aside in contempt, on seeing him forsake,

¹ "Opere," vol. i. p. 39.

² Ibid., vol. i. p. 40.

without any reason, his glorious and promising enterprise of the re-constitution of the Roman republic.¹ He then proceeds to describe the disorders of Italy; the schism in the Church; the removal of the papal seat to Avignon and its restoration to Rome; the Councils of Pisa and Constance; the ambitious designs of the Visconti, especially of Giovanni Galeazzo; the strange vicissitudes of Giovanna II. of Naples; the military enterprises of Sforza, Braccio di Montone, and the other Italian condottieri, who, from this moment, as Machiavelli tells us, were the destruction of the national arms.

He finally concludes by a sweeping glance at the political conditions of Italy at the beginning of the fifteenth century. After enumerating all the different States and potentates which kept it divided, he winds up with these words: "All these leading potentates were without forces of their own. Duke Philip,² locked in his private chambers, and admitting no one to his presence, carried on his campaigns by means of his commissaries. The Venetians, as they turned their attention to the mainland, stripped themselves of the arms which had won them glory by sea, and, following the fashion of other Italians, administered their States by government at second-hand. The Pope not being well able to carry arms, by reason of his frock and Queen Joan of Naples, by reason of her sex, did from necessity that which the rest had done by evil choice. Even the Florentines were subject to the same needs, for having extinguished their nobility, through their frequent dissensions, and their republic having fallen into the hands of traders, they followed the rule and fortune of others."

"The armies of Italy therefore had become mercenary, and confided to *condottieri*, who made a business of fighting, and being all connected by common interests, reduced war to a game in which no one was victor." "Indeed at last they brought it to such utter degradation, that any mediocre captain endowed with the faintest spark of the ancient valour, might have disgraced them all, to the admiration of the whole of Italy, who now by her own foolishness held them all in honour. Therefore, of these slothful princes and most despicable armies my history will be full, but before coming down to that part of it, I must go back to recount the origin of Florence, according to the promise made by me at

¹ "Opere," vol. i. p. 49.

² Filippo Maria Visconti.

the commencement."¹ And he then begins his second book, which is actually the first of the history of Florence.

To sum up: Italy after being overrun by barbarians, owing to the decline of the Empire and the crime of those who from jealousy or motives of personal hatred had invoked foreign help, enjoyed a brief interval of peace and happiness when the wise prince Theodoric succeeded in binding it into a single State.

Upon his death, however, all future attempts failed to keep the country united, chiefly by fault of the popes, who, to augment their own power, sought to keep it divided, and were always summoning fresh barbarians and fresh foreigners to lacerate and trample upon it. From the same cause all the endeavours of the Communes to deliver it were vain, and equally vain the efforts of other princes to keep it united. Finally Communes and princes alike fell into the hands of the mercenary armies, that accomplished both their ruin and that of the whole country, which was now exposed to the blows of all who cared to strike; wherefore, with the entry of Charles VIII., the series of invasions and calamities began afresh. Such is the conception of the first book of the "Storie," a conception that naturally leads to another. The sole remedy for these evils is the institution of a national army under the rule of a prince able to organize and command his troops, and to use them for the defence and unity of the country, by abasing the power of the Papacy, emancipating and fortifying the State, and leaving at his death a legacy of good laws and civil institutions towards the establishment of liberty. He who shall accomplish this will be worthy of a place with the gods.

It is now time to see what Machiavelli has to tell us of the history of Florence, in the three following books.

¹ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 59-69.



CHAPTER XIII.

The "*Istorie Fiorentine*"—Bks. ii., iii., and iv. on the domestic history of Florence, down to the triumph of the Medici.



THE second book opens with the foundation of Florence, to which only a few words are devoted, and then passing on to the year 1215, relates the Buondelmonti tragedy, to which it attributes the division of the city into the Guelph and Ghibelline factions. The intervening years between 1215 and 1250 are passed over in silence, for like Aretino, Machiavelli only starts with a consecutive narrative of Florentine history from the latter year, and carries it down, in this second book, to 1348. He thus compresses into the space of eighty pages the whole vast period forming the subject of the lengthy chronicles of Giovanni Villani. He makes perpetual use of this author, but only once mentions his name together with that of Dante Alighieri.¹ But he makes use of him in a way very dissimilar from his previous treatment of Flavio Biondo's work. He puts aside all the fabulous traditions recorded by Villani on the origin of Florence; all the numerous chapters devoted to general European history, and even those treating of the external wars of the Republic. On the other hand, he details every account of internal divisions, revolutions, and civil reforms, and arranges them in his own way. Comparison of the narratives given by the two writers of the

¹ "*Opere*," vol. i. p. 63.

Buondelmonti tragedy,¹ the revolutions and reforms of 1250,² 1267,³ and 1280,⁴ the circumstances relating to Giano della Bella, and the Decrees of Justice of 1293,⁵ at once proves that Machiavelli always adhered to his original authority. This is confirmed more than once by the very blunders that he makes, sometimes by the fault of Villani, sometimes by failing to give a faithful interpretation of the latter's meaning. Absorbed in his new conception, and therefore in his proposed new arrangement of Florentine history, he proceeded with a certain haste, without too scrupulously weighing the exactness of minute particulars, dwelling much upon events suited to his purpose, while often neglecting others of genuine importance. And by compressing into so small a compass the numerous events scattered through the different chapters of the chronicle, he sometimes assigns to a single year incidents which had occurred at distant intervals, and is occasionally inaccurate as to the number of councils, and the nature of institutions, especially in cases where Villani employs a political terminology, of which the precise significance was beginning to be lost in the sixteenth century.

After a few general remarks upon colonies, Machiavelli tells us that Florence descended from the Etruscan city of Fiesole, whose merchants forsook the hill and established themselves on the banks of the Arno, where Roman colonists enlarged the infant town, which afterwards conquered Fiesole. Having said this, he quickly leaps to the year 1215, and tells the story of Buondelmonti, the incident to which, as we have said, he attributes the origin of the Guelphs and Ghibellines in Florence. And he never perceives that, in the preceding chapters, Villani had described a series of contests between the Florentine Commune and the barons of the rural district outside—ending by the subjection of the latter, and their enforced residence within the city—that, chiefly owing to the Uberti, led to the origin of civil war long before the year 1215. But no sooner, with another long stride to 1250, does Machiavelli begin the narrative of less remote

¹ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 66-68; Villani, "Cronica," bk. v. chaps. xxxviii. and xxxix. Even the catalogue of Guelph and Ghibelline families is identical in both writers.

² "Opere," vol. i. p. 69; Villani, "Cronica," bk. vi. chap. xxix.

³ "Opere," vol. i. p. 76; Villani, "Cronica," bk. vii. chaps. xvi., xvii.

⁴ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 77, 78; Villani, "Cronica," bk. vii. chap. lxxix.

⁵ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 79-86; Villani, "Cronica," bk. vii. chaps. viii., xii., xxvi., xxxviii., xxxix.

and less obscure events, than he launches a couple of remarks throwing an unexpected light on the history of the internal revolutions of Florence. He discerns that the Ghibellines were not only the imperial party, but the party of the aristocrats and the men of influence, whereas the Guelphs were the party of the Church and the populace. Consequently, the divisions and revolutions of Florence were defined and regulated by two different orders of causes and effects, namely, some internal and others external. On the one hand, the vicissitudes of the Empire and the Church, of the Suabians and Angevins of Naples ; on the other, the natural antipathies between nobles and people in the cities, and the increase of labour and commerce that gave strength to the latter, while the withdrawal to a distance and the weakness of the Empire lessened the power of the former ; these were the determining causes of Florentine parties and factions. When Frederic II.'s power was in the ascendant, he immediately favoured the Uberti, chiefs of the Ghibellines, and the Guelphs were expelled. When Frederic II. died (1250), the burghers, who were Guelphs, became masters of the city, and established a new and more democratic government by means of the so-called *Costituzione del Primo Popolo*.

Machiavelli gives an enthusiastic description of this popular constitution, but in so doing, falls into many serious mistakes. He believes the constitution to have been formed by means of an agreement between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, whereas it was made by the former to the injury of the latter, and especially of the nobles. He believes it to have been the first free constitution in Florence, stating that the Florentines "now thought the moment arrived to assume a form of free government," and never mentions the preceding government by means of Consuls, and the institution of a Podestà, established in 1207 according to the chroniclers, and earlier still according to the documents of the time. What is still worse : he assigns to the same year of 1250 the creation of a Captain of the people and that of a Podestà, and merely styles them two foreign judges for civil and criminal cases. In fact, only the Captain of the people was created in that year as the defender of the popular interests in opposition to the Podestà, who was of older origin, of gentle blood, and sided with the nobility. Both officers were more than mere judges ; they had likewise political and military functions ; they were assisted by two Councils ; in the camp they commanded

the armies of the people and the Commune. And, just to mass everything together, Machiavelli attributes to the same year the institution of the Florentine Carroccio, really dating from a much earlier period.¹

By this constitution, continues Machiavelli, liberty was established, the people armed, and the Republic extended its territories.² But the rise of Manfred, after the death of Frederic II., restored the courage and strength of the Ghibellines, who rose in revolt, and though at first defeated in the city, overcame the Guelphs at Montaperti (1260), returned in triumph and finally possessed themselves of the government, which was thus again wrested from the people and given up to the nobility. Until this moment the history of the Florentine factions had been chiefly dependent on the course of general events in Italy; but henceforward the influence of internal causes began to prevail, and Machiavelli was the first historian to notice this, and record the almost imperceptible beginning of a great transformation in Florentine society. The Ghibelline party was becoming more and more identified with that of the feudal aristocracy; but was waning in strength and numbers before the rapid growth of the people that now went to swell the ranks of the Guelphs. The nobles, aware of the gravity of this fact, tried to effect a compromise; but this only hastened their downfall, and later on brought about a total change of parties in Florence. Accordingly, the Ghibellines, although still masters of the government, tried to win popular favour, by aiding the formation of the Greater and Lesser Guilds. But this was not sufficient. The Emperor's

¹ We have treated this question in two articles published in the "Politecnico" of Milan: "Le prime origini e le prime istituzioni della repubblica fiorentina" (July, 1866); "La Costituzione del Primo Popolo e delle Arti Maggiori" (December, 1866). In particular, see note at p. 676, vol. ii. of 1866.

² It seems that although Machiavelli now consulted Villani almost as his only authority, he still gave an occasional glance to Flavio Biondo. In fact, when speaking of the new constitution, he says: "By these civil and military institutions the Florentines founded their freedom. Nor can it be imagined how much authority and power Florence acquired in a short space of time, and not only became the chief power in Tuscany, but was counted among the first cities of Italy, and would have risen to the highest grandeur, but for the affliction of frequent and ever new divisions" ("Opere," vol. i. p. 70). And Flavio Biondo, at p. 299 of his work, after describing the same reform, remarks: "Crevitque mirum in modum, sub ea libertate populi florentini, simul cum potentatu audacia, adeo ut finitimos Hetruriæ populos contraria sentientes, aut fœderibus sibi coniungere, aut viribus domare cœperit."

absence, the great diminution of his power in Italy, and the triumph of the Angevins in Naples, finally had the effect of throwing the city entirely into the hands of the working classes, who placed the Priors of the Guilds at the head of the government in 1282. Villani, failing to grasp the true significance and value of the new magistrature, merely remarks that its title was derived from the gospel, where Christ exhorts the apostles, saying: *Vos estis priores*. But Machiavelli, who looked to the root of the matter, without discussing the origin of its name, makes instead the following just observation: "This magistrature was the cause, as was presently perceived, of the downfall of the nobles, since on various pretexts they were kept excluded from it by the people, and then mercilessly oppressed."¹

After dismissing the battle of Campaldino (1289), as that of Montaperti, in two or three words, Machiavelli passes on to the successive internal revolutions brought to a climax by the events of 1293, which were in fact their logical consequence. The Ghibellines were then so thoroughly crushed by the people, that they had almost entirely disappeared. "Nevertheless, all the bad blood found to be seething in every city between the great ones who seek to rule, and the people, that wishes to live according to the laws, was still very heated. The new factions did not come to light so long as the Ghibellines excited alarm; but as soon as the latter were conquered the former instantly began to assert their strength. No day passed without some injury done to a man of the people; and the laws were insufficient to avenge him, for the *Grandi*, with the aid of kinsfolk and friends, resisted the authority of the Priors and the Captain."² Thus evil passions went on increasing until Giano della Bella achieved the establishment of the *Ordinamenti di Giustizia* (1293), by which even the *Grandi* were excluded from the Signory and overthrown. "After which the people triumphed completely, and the city became very prosperous, being full of men of wealth and reputation."³

We see, then, that the Ghibellines rose to power with the aid of the Empire, but were afterwards defeated by the Guelphs, who then splitting into *Grandi* and *popolani*, the latter faction overcame and destroyed the first. The whole of this period of Florentine history is a slow but unceasing progression towards the final triumph of democracy.

But this triumph by no means put a stop to dissensions; on the

¹ "Opere," vol. i. p. 78. ² Ibid., vol. i. p. 79. ³ Ibid., vol. i. p. 84.

contrary, it marked the commencement of a transitional phase of party leaders, personal rivalries and fresh intestine quarrels, leading to the tyranny of the Duke of Athens. This was really a most remarkable episode of Florentine history, and is treated by Machiavelli at such length and with so much care, as to be altogether the principal theme of the second book of his "*Storie*." He first describes to us the ambitious temper of Corso Donati, the disturber of the Republic; then the wars against Uguccione della Faggiuola and Castruccio Castracani, of which he gives a far more faithful narrative than in his fantastic "*Vita di Castruccio*"; and finally dwells minutely on the coming of the Duke of Athens (1342), when summoned by the Florentines to rule over them and be their commander in the campaign they had undertaken against the Tuscan Ghibellines. Owing to their incessant disputes, the citizens had come to such a point that "they were unable to preserve liberty, and could not tolerate slavery." The Duke immediately became an armed tyrant, a new "Prince," and, as was only natural, Machiavelli gives a minute description of him, and an eloquent and dramatic version of the well-known tale. He takes his facts from Villani, but adds considerations, descriptions, and speeches of his own, and by the increased force and impressiveness of his style, we are speedily made aware that he has lighted upon a sympathetic theme. Indeed, he even forgets the limits that should have been imposed upon him by the general proportions of his work, and gives way to his propensity to indulge in reflections, invent speeches, and recount episodes vastly enhancing the attractions of the great historico-political picture that he places before his readers.

At the moment when the Duke is at last firmly established as master of the city, and it is plain that he intends to become an absolute tyrant, by obtaining the popular support, Machiavelli brings the Signory before him and puts a very singular and eloquent speech in their mouths. "You seek," they say to the Duke, "to enslave a city that has always lived in freedom. . . . Have you considered all that this implies to such a city, how mighty is the name of liberty, a name that no force can overcome, no time consume, no merit counterbalance? . . . In the midst of universal hatred no safety is possible, for you cannot know whence the danger may come, and he who fears all men can feel assured of none. And should you seek to do so, you plunge into deeper perils, because then the hatred of others burns yet more fiercely

and they are better prepared for revenge. That time cannot consume the thirst for liberty is most certain, since it frequently occurs in a city, that this thirst is felt by those who have never tasted liberty, and only hold it dear for the memory of it bequeathed to them by their fathers. . . . And even where their fathers have not reminded them of it, the public buildings, the palaces of the magistrates, the signs and tokens of free institutions, recall it to their minds, the which things are known and greatly prized by the citizens. What deeds of yours, think you, can outweigh the sweets of freedom, or make men cease to yearn after the present condition of things? Not even could you subject the whole of Tuscany to this government, and return to this city every day from triumphant conflict with our foes; forasmuch as all such glory would not be the city's, but your own, and the citizens would not gain subjects, but fellow-slaves, by whose means they would be plunged more deeply in slavery. And however holy might be your life, however benignant your manners, righteous your judgments, all this could not suffice to make you beloved. And did you deem them to suffice, you would be deluded, for to one accustomed to live unshackled, every chain is heavy and every bond galls."¹ This is how the Signory warn the Duke that his desire to establish a tyranny is urging him to certain destruction.

As is well known, Machiavelli was not the first to interpolate long speeches into historical writings. In imitation of the ancients, the Humanists had for some time adopted, and often abused, this practice. But the historians of old remained both eloquent and truthful, while giving us wholly imaginary discourses, for they made the Greeks and Romans speak in accordance with their genuine modes of thought. The Humanists, on the contrary, by their endeavour to make Italians of the Middle Ages and the fifteenth century converse like Romans, achieved nothing beyond paltry displays of rhetoric. The same defect is also to be found in many historians of the Cinquecento.

Nevertheless, the discourses of Guicciardini and Machiavelli demand a different estimate. The former sometimes puts into the mouths of his personages words really uttered by them; more frequently, however, he makes them explain the real causes, bearings, and consequences of the actual facts. And accordingly his speeches have a great and positive value, although not always free from

¹ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 118-120.

rhetorical flourish. On the other hand, Machiavelli's speakers, although equally fictitious, exhibit the author's own feelings and reflections with regard to historical events, and are therefore always profound, always most eloquent, although when we remember the supposed speakers, we are struck by the amount of anachronism and improbability. Who could believe, for instance, that the Florentine Signory would have ventured to show so bold a front in addressing the soldier Duke who was already lord of their city, or to manifest so profound a love of liberty? Yet their speech is extremely eloquent, because it expresses all that the circumstances suggested and inspired to Machiavelli, who, being kindled by his own narrative, is himself the actual orator, and speaks with profound earnestness.

After this, and following Villani's lead, he continues the tale of the Duke's tyranny; of the hatred it aroused in the people; of the three conspiracies simultaneously woven by three different classes of citizens, and at last gives a most lively description of the fierce outbreak of popular fury, which first drove away the tyrant, and then vented itself upon his trustiest followers and supporters, particularly on the *Conservator* Guglielmo d'Assisi and his youthful son aged eighteen years.¹ "Enmities seem fiercer, wounds deeper, on the recovery of liberty than during its defence. Messer Guglielmo and his son were surrounded by thousands of their enemies, and the son had not yet completed his eighteenth year. Nevertheless, neither youth, innocence, nor beauty availed to save him from the fury of the multitude; and those who could not wound the victims while still breathing, stabbed them after they were dead, and, still unsatiated with tormenting them, slashed the corpses with their weapons, and tore them tooth and nail. And in order that every sense might be sated with vengeance, after having first listened to their groans, seen their wounds, and touched their lacerated flesh, they proceeded to taste them, so that their own internal parts might be satisfied equally with their external organs."² Even these concluding particulars are taken from Villani with very slight alterations; but no one but Machiavelli could have discovered so excellent a style, especially in the expression of hatred for tyranny and of the love of liberty.

The Duke expelled, and his most trusted followers put to death,

¹ "Opere," vol. i. p. 121 and fol.; Villani, "Cronica," vol. iv. bk. xii. chaps. xv.-xviii.

² "Opere," vol. i. p. 129.

after other riots and tumults, the Decrees of Justice were once more enforced, and the nobles again totally excluded from the government, which reverted to the people. The nobles being now completely crushed, sought, by changing their names, to be confused with the people, against whom they no longer dared to take arms, "and, indeed, became continually meeker and more abject. Whereby Florence was not only stripped of arms, but likewise of all generosity."¹ Here it is worthy of note that Machiavelli, who so earnestly desired the triumph of democracy, and so greatly hated the aristocracy, nevertheless saw and frankly acknowledged that the latter's fall led to the decline of arms in the Italian Communes, and the subsequent reliance upon mercenary captains, who, as will be shown in the following books, proved the ruin of the national liberty, independence, and strength.

Thus the second book of the "*Istorie*" has many gaps, many inaccuracies; neglects all mention of the external affairs of the Republic, dwells with undue length upon certain internal events, while passing too lightly over others; and being compiled from Villani's "*Chronicle*," is entirely wanting in original research. Yet even putting aside its principal episode, that of the Duke of Athens, recounted with such vigorous and splendid eloquence, this second book is still one of our masterpieces of historical literature. For in it Machiavelli, with eagle-like penetration, brings into unity the history of more than a hundred years. Events which, although clearly narrated, are disconnected in Villani, and scattered as at random over his pages; the string of revolutions, the continual fresh disorders and new political institutions, which according to all the chroniclers, and even the historians, seem entirely at the mercy of chance, solely caused by brutal hatreds and ferocious passions, are here all marvellously brought into logical connection and for the first time converted into genuine history. For Machiavelli discerned that all these revolutions arose from the same cause, had a single aim, towards which they incessantly urged the Republic until it touched the predestined goal. It was a question of the sanguinary struggle between the people, in whose veins ran Latin blood, and the feudal aristocracy, which was of Germanic origin, and foreign to Italy. This struggle ended by the total destruction, first of the feudal lords, and then of the nobles known as the *Grandi*, that took place in 1293, and was still more effectually completed after

¹ "*Opere*," vol. i. p. 137.

the expulsion of the Duke of Athens. Thus, all the Florentine revolutions and institutions were not only connected together, but followed one another as though evolved from one and the same idea. In this way, through Machiavelli's critical analysis, this most confused and intricate history suddenly acquires the self-evidence of a geometrical proposition. The darkness has been dispersed by the electric light of his mighty intellect, and the most marvellous order introduced into the chaos bequeathed to us by the chroniclers. The whole secret of Florentine history is contained in this second book. And here it may be truly affirmed that no one has ever succeeded in doing better than he, and that the many writers who, even in after years, proved unable to follow the course he had marked out, always missed their aim, and relapsed into disorder and confusion.

The third book goes from the year 1353 to 1414, and is compiled from three different authors. Down to 1378 Machiavelli uses the "*Istoria Fiorentina*" of Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, in the same way that he had used Villani, namely, by dwelling solely on passages relating to the internal struggles of the Republic and its political reforms. The special theme of this book is the exposition of the manner in which the multiplication of parties leads to the dissolution of the State, inasmuch as parties corrupt the city, and by the destroyal of liberty prepare the way for tyranny. Accordingly, the principal episode is that of the Revolt of the Ciompi (1378), when popular excesses sowed the seed of the future power of the Medici, who for that very reason had been the secret helpers and fomenters of that great riot. Machiavelli relies, in his account, on the contemporary history of the event written by Gino Capponi. But, as this was incomplete, he is obliged towards the end to again revert to Marchionne di Coppo Stefani. Farther on in this book, he refers also to other writers; but it is difficult to identify them all, since at this point the narrative proceeds very swiftly. He is most cautious in the choice of authorities; his favourite authors are always the best and most trustworthy as regards the facts for which he refers to them. But this does not always prevent him from making a very arbitrary use of them, especially whenever he wishes to enforce any of his own pet ideas or political theories.

Every book of Machiavelli's history is prefaced by a few general reflections. In the first, he starts with some brief remarks on the migrations and incursions of the Germanic tribes; in

the second he treats of the planting of colonies. The third and following books are prefaced by set introductions, each of which, in clear and precise terms, propounds some historico-political problem that is demonstrated in the subsequent narration. And these are precious, not only for their intrinsic value, but because they teach us how, to Machiavelli's eyes, history became transmuted into political science. We often see this science spring into life, as it were, beneath our gaze. "It is by natural enmities between the people and the nobility," so begins the third book, "that cities are divided and convulsed. Such enmities kept Rome and Florence divided, though in diverse fashion; for whereas in Rome they were manifested by disputes, and quieted by a law framed for the good of the public, in Florence, on the contrary, they began by combats, were exasperated by the banishment and execution of many citizens, and were ended by some decree conceived solely to the advantage of the victors. Roman dissensions, by bringing the people in nearer contact with the nobles, fostered military valour; those of Florence extinguished it, by destroying the nobles. All this occurred because the Roman people only wished to share with the patricians in governing the affairs of the State; but the people of Florence, on the contrary, wished to exclude the nobles in order to have the sole command. The desire of the former people was just, and the Roman patricians gave way; the latter was unjust, and the Florentine nobility was obliged to resist. Thus there was fighting, banishment, bloodshed, and the laws were unjust, partial, and cruel. The nobles were forced to change their names, armorial bearings, and habits, and to mix with the people, so that the military valour and highmindedness appertaining to the aristocracy were extinguished, and could not be rekindled in the people who had it not; consequently, Florence became more and more humiliated and abject."¹

This comparison with Rome, also so frequently repeated in the "Discourses," is undoubtedly somewhat strained. Machiavelli omits to notice that the Florentine aristocracy was feudal and of foreign origin, but not so the Roman; he is guilty of considerable exaggeration when he says that in Rome the struggles

¹ For the better comprehension of the whole of this introduction, of which several passages are somewhat obscure, it will be useful to compare it with the concluding portion of chap. ii. of bk. i. of Machiavelli's "Discourses." "Opere," vol. iii. pp. 18, 19.

between the people and patricians were always peaceful, and forgets how they led to an equality that later became the basis of Cæsarism. For in reality he establishes a comparison between the real history of Florence and a somewhat imaginary history of Rome, to which he attributes all the qualities he wished to discover in his political ideal. Nevertheless, all that he says of Florence is very true, and the result of keen observation, and his reflections with regard to the parallel drawn by him are also of much intrinsic value. They strangely resemble what has since been asserted by great modern writers, when comparing the political history of France with that of England. The English aristocracy, by joining with the middle class in the government of the country, gained a fresh increment of vigour and vitality; the French aristocracy, by separating itself entirely from the middle class and the people, obtained destruction at the hands of the triumphant democracy. England, therefore, made steady progress, had a strong, well-regulated, and liberal government; whereas France underwent continual revolutions, and attained to a great equality, in which all forms of government were possible and all were experimented. This is not very different from the views expressed by Machiavelli at the close of the introduction to his third book, where he says that: "Florence has reached such a stage, that a skilful legislator might easily mould it to any form of government."¹

The Duke of Athens had roused the populace and utilized its support in order to establish his tyranny. Accordingly, after his expulsion, party struggles were complicated by the introduction of a novel order of citizens forming a new element of discord. In fact, Florence was now the scene of perpetual conflict between the *popolo grasso*, or substantial traders of the Greater Guilds, the *popolo minuto*, or petty traders and artisans of the Lesser Guilds, and the populace. Arms having declined, all wars had to be carried on by the Companies of Adventure, who only fought for hire. In this condition of things the family of the Albizzi and other well-to-do burghers began to come to the front and gain influence in the city, no longer by force and violence, but by means of what were then called civil methods—*modi civili*—namely, by gaining possession of political offices, and by persecuting and banishing their adversaries as Ghibellines, although that party had ceased to exist.

¹ "Opere," vol. i. p. 141.

There was great disorder, in short, and Machiavelli, for its better description and the more forcible rendering of his own general reflections on the causes and course of parties, his grief at the spectacle of his country's decay, and the insecurity of liberty in Florence and the whole of Italy, brings some citizens before the Signory and makes them pronounce the following words: "The cities of Italy are teeming with all things capable of receiving or dealing corruption. The young are slothful, the old vicious, and either sex and every age is consumed by evil customs which good laws, being enfeebled by abuses, are powerless to cure. Consequently, decrees and laws are now made for private instead of public interests. Hence wars and treaties of peace and alliance are ordained, not for the general glory, but for the satisfaction of the few. And of all cities torn by similar divisions, our own is certainly the worst. Wherefore it ensues that no sooner is this faction expelled, and that division quelled, than another arises; for when a city seeks to maintain itself by sects rather than by laws, no sooner has one sect vanquished all opposition, than of necessity that sect becomes divided against itself." "It was, for instance, believed that when the Ghibellines were destroyed, the Guelphs would long remain prosperous; but, on the contrary, they split into the *Bianchi* and the *Neri*. The *Bianchi* being vanquished, fresh quarrels arose from the dissensions between the people and the aristocrats. And, thereupon, in order to give to others that which we did not know how to preserve for ourselves, we yielded our liberty now to King Robert, now to his brother, then to his son, and finally to the Duke of Athens. But, as we were never agreed either to live in freedom, or exist in slavery, we drove away the Duke of Athens, whose sour and tyrannical soul had after all failed to give us wisdom, or teach us how to live. For, in fact, we quarrelled among ourselves more than before, until the old nobility was conquered, and we had to be at the mercy of the people. It was thought that all cause of trouble would be ended now that a check had been imposed upon those who had divided the city by their overbearing pride. It has been seen, on the contrary, how fallacious are human hopes, for the haughtiness and ambition of the aristocrats were not extinguished, but passed on to the plebeians, who now, according to the fashion of the ambitious, seek to obtain the first rank in the Republic, and revive the terms of Guelph and Ghibelline which had been previously abolished.

Seek, therefore, to destroy the evil that sickens us, the rage that consumes us, the poison that destroys us, by curbing the ambition of those men, annulling decrees which foster division, and promulgating such as are favourable to true freedom and civil order." ¹

The Signory then elected fifty-six citizens to reform the Republic; but only succeeded in heightening the confusion, because, as Machiavelli had already frequently said, and now repeated, "the mass of men are better fitted to preserve a good government, than to discover one for themselves." ² Accordingly the Albizzi became more powerful than before, and when Pope Gregory XI. at Avignon declared war against Florence, they assumed the lead of the *popolo grasso*, made all necessary arrangements for the defence, and conducted the campaign with so much energy, that not only were the forces of the Pope repulsed, but the subject cities in his own States stirred to rise in the name of liberty. And the Eight of War, although they had disregarded interdicts, despoiled the churches of their wealth, and compelled the clergy to celebrate the rites of religion, enjoyed the full favour of the people, and were styled the Eight Saints, "so much higher being then the regard of those citizens for their country than for their soul." ³

The acquisition of power on the part of the Albizzi and the "fat burghers" was caused by the fact that the wealthy merchants at the head of the vast trade and commerce of Florence, were the only persons interested in carrying on the external wars of the Republic. For in this way they could increase the power of

¹ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 146-151.

² Ibid., vol. i. p. 151.

³ Ibid., vol. i. p. 153. We have already noted that this expression, also quoted on another occasion by Guicciardini, was first used by Neri di Gino Capponi. The term of "Otto Sani" is not to be found in Stefani, but is, however, repeated by Nardi, "Storia," vol. i. p. 7. Down to this portion of the second book, Machiavelli follows the "Istorie Fiorentine" of Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, published in the "Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani" of Padre Ildelfonso di San Luigi, vol. vii. and fol. This history is divided in rubrics. To see how and to what extent Machiavelli made use of it, the following passages may be compared: Machiavelli, "Opere," vol. i. pp. 141, 142, and Stefani, rubric 662; Machiavelli, p. 143, and Stefani, rubric 665; Machiavelli, p. 144, and Stefani, rubrics 674 and 695; Machiavelli, p. 145, and Stefani, rubrics 725 and 726; Machiavelli, p. 151, and Stefani, rubric 732 (here Marchionne Stefani alludes to many reforms which Machiavelli leaves unmentioned); Machiavelli, p. 152, and Stefani, rubric 751; Machiavelli, p. 153, and Stefani, rubrics 751, 760, and 761.

the State while guarding the freedom of traffic, by which they accumulated their own riches and those of their city. Accordingly, they were always willing to make all needful sacrifices. They heaped taxes upon themselves as well as upon others, nor were they over scrupulous, on emergency, as to restricting the public liberties. The lesser arts, on the contrary, who earned their bread by petty industries, and petty internal traffic, were eager for peace and for a public luxury, indispensable to their own well-being; they desired fewer taxes, greater privileges, and at least some share in the management of the State. Consequently, it was always seen that the *popolo grasso* triumphed in time of war, and the *popolo minuto* in time of peace. And thus, no sooner was the war against the Pope ended, than complaints ensued as to the expenses incurred, the burdens imposed. Therefore the Albizzi lost favour; the *popolo minuto* on the other hand gained ground, and began to seek for leaders. One of much skill was speedily discovered in Salvestro dei Medici, who, although belonging to the richer class, became from that moment the champion of the interests of the *popolo minuto*, and thus, with infinite sagacity, began to prepare the way for the supremacy of his own family. Machiavelli was the first historian to date the origin of the Medicean rule from this remote moment, and to clearly define the character of their very astute and fortunate policy.

On being chosen Gonfalonier in 1378, Salvestro opposed the Albizzi, favoured their enemies and the *popolo minuto*, and enforced the Decrees of Justice which had lapsed into disuse. But it was impossible to effect all this without riots, and without these riots giving rise to unexpected consequences. "Let no one," says Machiavelli at this point, "believe that he can make a change in a city, and then check it at his own pleasure, or regulate it after his own conceit."¹ This measure, in fact, proved the beginning of the revolt of the Ciompi, serving to fill a great part of the third book, and related at length by Machiavelli, with the aid of Capponi, and the addition of numerous speeches and reflections of his own.² The people and populace, having

¹ "Opere," vol. i. p. 158.

² "Tumulto dei Ciompi scritto da Gino Capponi," published in the "Cronichette antiche di varii scrittori." Florence, Domenico Maria Manni, 1733 (from p. 219 to 249, of the volume). It is useful to compare Machiavelli, "Opere," vol. i. pp. 156 and 157, with Capponi, p. 220; Machiavelli, p. 158, and Capponi, p. 221; Machiavelli, p. 159, and Capponi, pp. 221, 223, and 225;

won the first concessions, began to be turbulent, make riots, and continually press fresh demands upon the Signory. No sooner were these granted, than others were urged of a more exorbitant nature, and at last they began to pillage and burn the citizens' houses. Upon this the Gonfalonier Luigi Guicciardini called together the heads of the Guilds and said to them: "We have yielded to your every demand. The magisterial authority has been lessened, new curbs have been put on the nobles, many powerful citizens sent into banishment; we have pardoned those who burnt houses and pillaged churches. Where will your demands end? Do you not see that we show more patience in defeat, than you in victory? What will result to your city from all your divisions?"¹

And after making the Gonfalonier speak in this wise, Machiavelli assigns to a representative of the people another speech, recalling here and there the language of Catiline in Sallust, and painting with singular eloquence the fierce passions of the unbridled Florentine mob. It shows the strange mixture of heathenism and Christianity peculiar to the Renaissance. "Had we now to decide whether we ought to take arms and burn and sack the citizens' houses, perhaps I, too, would rather vote for quiet poverty than perilous gain. But seeing that we are already in arms, and much mischief has been already done, we must now remain sword in hand, and secure some advantage from the harm committed. If nothing else can teach us, necessity gives us a lesson. The city is full of hatred against us, and new weapons are being forged to strike us. And the sole way to gain forgiveness for our old sins, is by committing others, redoubling our burnings and robberies, and seeking many accomplices in them," "since where many sin, no one is chastised; and small faults are punished, but great and grave ones rewarded. And when many suffer, few seek vengeance, for universal injuries are endured with more patience than private woes. Therefore, by multiplying our crimes, it will be all the

Machiavelli, p. 160, and Capponi, pp. 223 and 224; Machiavelli, p. 160, and Capponi, p. 233; Machiavelli, p. 170, and Capponi, pp. 234-236, and 238; Machiavelli, p. 171, and Capponi, pp. 237, 239, and 240; Machiavelli, p. 172, and Capponi, p. 243; Machiavelli, p. 173, and Capponi, pp. 244 and 245; Machiavelli, p. 174, and Capponi, p. 246; Machiavelli, p. 175, and Capponi, p. 246. Capponi's work terminates at the Gonfaloniership of Michele di Lando, so at that point Machiavelli reverts to Marchionne di Coppo Stefani. *Vide* Machiavelli, p. 177, and Stefani, rubric 804; Machiavelli, pp. 178 and 179, and Stefani, rubric 805.

¹ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 161-163.

easier to obtain pardon. . . . It is grievous to me to hear that many of you repent in your souls of the deeds you have done, and mean to abstain from committing others. For if that be true, you are certainly not the men I believed you to be, for neither conscience nor infamy ought to have any terror for you ; inasmuch as those who conquer, no matter in what way, need never take shame of their victory. And as for conscience, that should not trouble us much, for, knowing what it is to dread hunger and imprisonment, there neither can nor should be room in us for fear of hell."¹

And now, in the midst of the riot, Machiavelli beholds the fantastic figure of Michele di Lando, who half naked and bare-footed mounted the palace stairs with the mob at his heels, and was proclaimed Gonfalonier by the voice of the people. Then to show us that this proletary, whom his imagination exalted, was "sagacious and prudent, and more indebted to nature than to fortune," he gives us an anecdote mainly of his own invention. Accordingly he says that Michele di Lando, finding himself exalted by a populace intoxicated with victory and panting for blood, determined to find a way of dominating it, and preventing the commission of greater excesses. He therefore ordered the arrest of Ser Nuto, who was held in great detestation, and had been destined by the adversaries of the people to fill the office of Bargello. All his companions immediately rushed off, heated with wrath, to hunt for Ser Nuto, and Michele profited by the opportunity. To inaugurate by justice the rule he had acquired by fortune, not only did he prohibit all further burning of houses, but set up a gallows in the Piazza, to show that his threats would be enforced. Meanwhile the crowd came back, dragging Ser Nuto, who was "hung from that gallows by one foot, and some one standing near having knocked a bit off him, all of a sudden there was nothing left of him excepting that foot." According to Machiavelli Michele di Lando had given no direct orders for the murder of Ser Nuto, because it was not necessary to do so. His object in choosing as a victim one so detested that none could wish or be able to save him, was to satiate by this means the popular fury. In fact he thus succeeded in saving the life and property of many citizens, and speedily re-established order and justice.²

Unluckily nothing of this is corroborated by history. There is

¹ "*Opere*," vol. i. pp. 165-167.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. pp. 173, 174.

no mention of the killing of Ser Nuto in Capponi's "Tumulto dei Ciompi," for the narrative ceases before that point ; but it is recorded by other historians, to whom Machiavelli now refers,¹ and attributed by all to a fierce and unpremeditated burst of popular fury, without any suggestion that Michele di Lando was in the least responsible for it. The murder was an actual fact, and it would also seem that the public fury really subsided after its accomplishment. But the orders given by Michele to the people, and his purpose in giving them, are mentioned by none save Machiavelli, and are certainly fictions of his own. He was so profoundly persuaded that any man capable of rising to great prominence in revolutions or politics, must necessarily have a drop of Cæsar Borgia's blood in his veins that he discovered it where it had no existence. He tried to convert the plain wool-carder who won a brief popularity, and though really doing more good than harm, had no elements of greatness, into a far-sighted politician and a noble character. He accorded him unbounded admiration, because he regarded him as a defender of popular rights who never attempted to turn personal success to account by establishing a tyranny. And having once begun to paint the man's portrait, he tried to enhance its attractions by colouring it from his own imagination, which was often too ready to behold a Borgia on every side.

Machiavelli pursues his narrative to the end in the same enthusiastic strain. When the mob proceeded to farther excesses, and neither reasoning nor menace availed to restrain it, Michele rushed through the city, sword in hand, with a numerous following of armed men, and quelled the rebels by force. So at last the riots were stopped solely by the valour of the Gonfalonier, who in courage, prudence, and goodness, surpassed every citizen of that period, and deserved to be numbered among the few who have benefited their country, for his goodness forbade him to conceive any thought that should be opposed to the public welfare."²

In actual truth Michele di Lando was not only a far less

¹ Marchionne di Coppo Stefani mentions it at rubric 795 and Aretino at the beginning of book ix. For further details of the "Tumulto dei Ciompi," *vide* the interesting work with that title published by Prof. Carlo Fossati in vol. i. of the "Pubblicazioni del R. Istituto di Studii Superiori in Firenze" (Section of Philosophy and Philology), Florence, Le Monnier. In chap. iv. § iii. the author narrates the fate of Ser Nuto, according to authentic accounts edited and inedited, and arrives at the same conclusion as ourselves.

² "Opere," vol. i. pp. 177, 178.

significant personage, but often an involuntary and unwitting instrument in the hands of Salvestro, and in no case could have been able to aspire to absolute rule.¹

Machiavelli now falls back upon Marchionne Stefani,² and then presently availing himself of Aretino³ and others, carries his narrative forward to 1414. First of all, he investigates the earliest political results of the revolt, consisting in a reaction against the excessive power of the populace, which was then expelled from the government, and in another triumph of the Trades, in which, however, the Lesser prevailed over the Greater Guilds. The enemies of the Albizzi now rose to power, namely, men such as Giorgio Scali, and above all Salvestro dei Medici, who after secretly fomenting and manipulating the revolt, profited by the reaction that was then setting in no less to the injury of the populace than of the Greater Guilds. He, and not Michele di Lando, had played the astute politician, and his descendants reaped the harvest of this revolution. Machiavelli was the first historian to take account of this fact; but he could not admire a policy of mere subterfuge, and devoid of daring, that, while feigning to support the rights of the people, solely aimed at the destroyal of liberty. Consequently he extolled and idealized the modest and hardy wool-carder, who never thought of abusing his success.

But when the long war began between the Florentines and Giovan Galeazzo Visconti, Count of Virtù, who was lord of Milan and sought to become master of the whole of Italy, the government of Florence again passed into the hands of the Greater Guilds and the Albizzi, who, as usual, conducted the war with admirable energy and patriotism.⁴ But they were once more compelled to augment taxation, and keep down the lowest classes, so that the latter's discontent was proportionately great. Hence, no sooner was danger at an end and peace at hand, than the masses rebelled and turned to Messer Vieri dei Medici, who had

¹ See what is said of him on this subject by Fossati, in the above-quoted work.

² We have already quoted the rubrics in question.

³ *Vide* Machiavelli, p. 180, and Aretino (Italian edition), p. 478; Machiavelli, p. 182, and Aretino, pp. 484, 489, and 490; Machiavelli, p. 183, and Aretino, p. 490; Machiavelli, p. 184, and Aretino, p. 491; Machiavelli, p. 186, and Aretino, p. 491; Machiavelli, pp. 188, 189, and Aretino, p. 506; Machiavelli, p. 192, and Aretino, p. 556. Here, too, Machiavelli occasionally makes use of other historians, and alludes to it himself at p. 193.

⁴ "Opere," vol. i. p. 191.

succeeded to Salvestro, was now the practical head of the city, and also pursued the same policy of expectancy.

The fourth book describes the manner in which the Medici at last contrived to touch the much-desired goal. It starts from the year 1420, thus passing over several years, and goes down to the triumph of Cosimo dei Medici, on his return from exile in 1434. The fact of few noteworthy events having occurred during the intervening years is not the sole reason for this leap. Machiavelli now makes frequent use of a new authority, the "*Istorie Fiorentine*," of Giovanni Cavalcanti, beginning precisely from 1420.¹

¹ The "*Istorie*" were intended to go on to 1450, but really broke off in 1440. In another and later work designated by the editor as the "*Seconda Storia*," Cavalcanti related the events that took place between 1440 and 1447. He was a credulous and fantastic man, with a craze for Platonic philosophy, had little talent, and was a bad writer. He was a great admirer of Cosimo dei Medici, although he sometimes blamed him. The "*Istorie Fiorentine*" were written during the imprisonment he suffered for omitting to pay his taxes. The work was published by Filippo Polidori in two volumes, with documents in the appendix. Florence, The Dante Press, 1838 and 1839.

In the "*Historische Schriften*" of Gervinus, this author, after comparing the manuscript histories of Cavalcanti with the printed ones of Machiavelli, censures the Italians for having neglected to publish the former, while wasting their time in the study and publication of literary manuscripts from which they gained nothing but words and phrases for the Cruscan Academy. The reproof was not altogether undeserved, but the German historian might have noted many things on which he was silent. As he had been in Florence, and brought out his work in 1833 in Germany, he should have remembered that long before he had done so, Canon Domenico Moreni, in a "*Lettera bibliografica*" addressed to Canon Carlo Ciocchi (Florence, Ciardetti, 1803, at pp. 12 and 13), had recommended the publication of Cavalcanti's "*Istorie*," spoke of them afterwards in his "*Bibliografia storico-ragionata della Toscana*," and brought out their more important parts in an octavo volume entitled: "*Della carcere, dell' ingiusto esilio e del trionfale ritorno di Cosimo Padre della Patria, tratto dalla Istoria fiorentina manoscritta di Giovanni Cavalcanti*." Florence, Magheri, 1821. And in the preface to this work (pp. xxvii, xxviii), Moreni even then remarked what Gervinus thought himself the first to discover: "Although, as we have seen, this history is very defective in its diction, no one has as yet noticed that it served as a guide and authority to Machiavelli for his own history. And this can be easily verified by any one, who may wish to do so, without it being necessary for us to cite any passage or example in support of our assertion."

The "*Seconda Storia*," narrating the events from 1440 to 1447, is of less importance and worse written. Polidori published the greater part of it in the shape of an additional volume. In the appendix he also added some fragments of another work by Cavalcanti, a treatise on politics, or rather on morals, which is quite valueless. The "*Seconda Storia*" was written out of prison, as the author tells us at the beginning. But after all it is only fair to add that Gervinus's reproofs had some share in promoting the publication in Florence of a good and complete edition of Cavalcanti's "*Histories*."

Lack of literary value long condemned this work to oblivion ; nevertheless, as a contemporary narrative, it was held to be and is really a trustworthy guide. Accordingly, Machiavelli frequently availed himself of it and to a far greater extent than of any other of his authorities. Sometimes, merely changing the style, he copies him outright.

The Medici now make their first appearance as powerful personages, and Machiavelli shows a desire to turn from the internal affairs of Florence, and dwell instead upon the external wars which he had hitherto neglected. However, in this fourth book he does not enlarge much upon these ; only indeed mentions them in order to speak ill of the mercenary leaders, note the influence of the wars upon the factions within the walls of Florence, and the infinite cleverness with which the Medici contrived to turn even the wars to account. He borrows Cavalcanti's description of certain of these campaigns, and gives it a colouring of his own ; but he passes many of them over in silence, in order to follow his author much more closely in the narrative of city events. Cavalcanti often indulges in original reflections, expressed in endless speeches, the supposed utterances of his characters. These speeches are high-flown, turgid, and altogether painful reading, but have the merit of containing arguments really enunciated in Florence with reference to the events that happened from day to day. Machiavelli therefore had no scruple as to imitating or copying them in his history ; and these bursts of see-saw rhetoric are converted into genuine eloquence by the magic of his pen, just as the lengthy, monotonous narratives of the earlier writer become rapid, forcible, and most vivacious in the hands of his successor. And as to this is added the logical connection of events never to be found in Cavalcanti, it is easy to understand why this fourth book of the "Histories" should have a special and considerable value of its own, although comprising continual plagiarisms such as can only be realized by those who have collated the two authors. Such comparison will likewise show the ease with which a man of genius can change the worst written pages into excellent literary work.

After a brief introduction on the perils incurred by liberty where no good laws place a curb on the excesses of the nobles tending to oppression, or on those of the people tending to licence, Machiavelli observes that the ancients indeed had good laws, but not the Italian republics, and that consequently the

latter always ended by requiring the despotic rule of some single individual. "There has been a manifest example of this in Florence, where the parties called into existence by the dissensions of the Albizzi and the Ricci, and so scandalously resuscitated by Messer Salvestro dei Medici, were never extinguished. The deserts of the Albizzi with regard to their country were certainly great; but the family soon became insolent, and were all of them torn by envy one of the other, the which afforded the Medici an opportunity for gradually re-establishing their own authority over the people. Thus, at last, to the great joy of the masses, Giovanni obtained the post of first magistrate. And it was in vain that men wiser than the rest, more especially Niccolò da Uzzano, raised a warning cry that this would prove the beginning of a tyranny."¹

We are then quickly brought to the war against Filippo Maria Visconti, who aspired to the domination of all Italy. The Albizzi were again at the head of the government, and again showed great energy in the conduct of the war, which, however, was ended in 1424, by the rout of Zagonara.² Cavalcanti says that the battle "was tremendous and mortal at the beginning," but that from the unskillfulness of their captains, the Florentines were surrounded and put to flight. The commander-in-chief was made prisoner; Lodovico degli Obizzi, one of the captains, was killed; a third was drowned.³ Furthermore the enemy stripped 3,200 knights of their arms.⁴ All this would lead to the belief that at least several soldiers as well as captains were killed. But Machiavelli, even with Cavalcanti's pages before him, is eager to take the first opportunity to express his contempt for mercenary arms, and without mentioning that any resistance was made, hastily concludes by saying that "in the tremendous defeat that was noised throughout Italy, no one perished excepting Lodovico degli Obizzi and two of his men, who being thrown from their horses, were smothered in the mud."⁵ We shall see that he always repeats the same assertion with regard to other campaigns where there was much harder fighting, and the number of the fallen was more accurately known.

¹ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 203-206.

² *Vide Ibid.*, vol. i. pp. 206 and 209; Cavalcanti, "Storie," vol. i. p. 6.

³ Cavalcanti, "Istorie Fiorentine," vol. i. pp. 59-64.

⁴ Ammirato, "Storie," bk. xviii. at conclusion.

⁵ "Opere," vol. i. p. 214.

The immediate result of the rout of Zagonara was the overthrow of the Greater Guilds and the Albizzi in Florence. Every public place rang with execrations against their ambition. "Now have they created the Ten in order to strike terror into their enemies! Now have they succoured Forlì and wrested it from the hands of the Duke! Now at last their counsels are betrayed, and we see at what end they were aiming: they were labouring, not to defend liberty, which is hostile to them, but to increase their own power, which God has justly abased. Nor is this the only enterprise with which they have burdened the city, for there have been many others, and that against King Ladislaus much resembled this last. To whom can they now turn for aid? To Pope Martin, who has seen them inflict torture upon Braccio? To Queen Joan, who through their desertion was forced to cast herself into the arms of the King of Aragon?"¹

Who could believe this speech to be based upon that previously written by Cavalcanti? Yet so it is.² Twenty citizens were elected for the imposition of fresh taxes, and they naturally threw the chief burden upon the *popolani grassi*. Accordingly the latter held a meeting in Santo Stefano, where Rinaldo degli Albizzi made them a speech that Cavalcanti has spread over fifteen pages, drowning its propositions in a sea of words, whereas Machiavelli has summarized it in a few graphic sentences. Albizzi declared that it was necessary to restore the government to the *grandi*, and

¹ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 211, 212.

² Here is the discourse as it stands in Cavalcanti: "Sate yourselves then, ye voracious wolves, who would have burst before this had this city been allowed a little rest. You are always exciting fresh wars, unnecessary risks and abominable abuses. You even began the war against the king, reckless both of his rights and of the benefits received from his predecessors. Now take your fill of us, feed yourselves upon our miserable flesh; you have left no other sustenance to ourselves and our families. You always seek quarrels, yet see how you manage your wars. . . . To whom will you have recourse? What help can save you from the strength of your enemies? With what weapons will you defend your ungrateful arrogance? There are no longer sovereigns of Apulia, there is only Madonna Giovannella, whom you have forced into subjection to a barbarous people, by not silencing a vile adventurer. Who now will aid you? Pope Martin whom you so shamelessly allowed to be so insulted by your sons? Do you not know that their songs ran thus: *Papa Martino non vale un quattrino*: and *Braccio valente che vince ogni gente*? You never thought to have need of any man's help. It is written that once a lion had need of a mouse. Whither will you fly for safety? Now make your wars, and create the Ten, and say that they inspire fear to the enemy: now carry out all your foolish, ill-considered, motiveless plans" &c. (Cavalcanti, vol. i. bk. ii. chap. xxi. pp. 65-67).

diminish the influence of the Lesser Guilds by reducing them from fourteen to seven.¹ Other speeches followed, and are given by Machiavelli, who still copies them from Cavalcanti. Finally Albizzi was commissioned to win over Giovanni dei Medici to their party; but he refused, alleging that he disliked innovations, and was a friend of the people,² the which gained him a great increase of favour in the city. Cavalcanti then devotes five-and-twenty chapters to the external wars that re-established the strength of the Albizzi; but these are left aside by Machiavelli, who merely gives one or two anecdotes concerning them.

After peace was made, dissensions broke out again as usual, and Giovanni dei Medici promoted the law of Catasto, which by indicating the method of levying taxes according to the ascertained amount of revenue, and no longer by arbitrary caprice, was opposed by the *popolo grasso*, favoured by the *popolo minuto*, and finally carried by the help of Giovanni,³ who died shortly after (1429). The description of his death, his exhortation to his children, and even the eulogy upon him, are all taken from the same source, all improved by the same skilful touch.⁴ Then, passing rapidly over other events, Machiavelli comes to the war against Lucca, which was again of use to the Medici. For although proclaimed at the instance of Astorre Gianni and Rinaldo degli Albizzi, who were appointed commissaries of war to the camp, it brought about their ruin. Astorre Gianni perpetrated great cruelties at Serravezza, notwithstanding the free

¹ "Opere," vol. i. p. 215. As another specimen of Cavalcanti's style, we subjoin the first sentence of his speech: "Great is my rejoicing and greater my comfort, respected soldiers and respectable citizens, to see you in this temple, forming so magnificent a circle about me, and all gazing attentively upon me, for the purpose of augmenting the welfare and honour of our republic" (Cavalcanti, "Storie Fiorentine," vol. i. bk. iii. p. 74). The discourse continues to p. 90, and always in the same style.

² "Opere," vol. i. pp. 215-217; Cavalcanti, vol. i. bk. iii. chaps. iii. and v.

³ "Opere," vol. i. p. 224; Cavalcanti, bk. iv. chaps. viii. and ix.; bk. v. chap. i.

⁴ "Opere," vol. i. p. 225; Cavalcanti, vol. i. bk. v. chaps. iii.-v. This is how Cavalcanti begins his account of the death of Giovanni dei Medici: "Two rats, one black and one white, having nibbled the roots of the fruit tree that had nourished that excellent citizen Giovanni dei Medici, its branches began to bend rapidly towards the hard earth. By this infirmity Giovanni knew that his life wished to reduce his wet and frigid humours to water, disperse his breath in the air, and render his body to the earth, and thus return his heat and dry parts to fire." Polidori thinks that the white and black rats signify day and night, namely, his past existence, or possibly even pleasure and pain.

surrender of that town. Accordingly, a few of its inhabitants brought complaints to Florence, saying: "This Commissary of yours has nothing human save his aspect, nothing Florentine save his name; he is a deadly pest, a savage beast, a horrible monster such as was never described by any writer."¹ Thereupon Astorre was recalled, and Albizzi being greatly enraged at having been accused of embezzlement with regard to the victualling of the army and the spoils of war, forsook the camp and threw up his office.² After that the war went badly, and the Florentines were defeated near the river Serchio.

After a brief record of these military doings, which are minutely described by Cavalcanti, Machiavelli at last introduces on the scene Cosimo dei Medici, who had so patiently waited the opportunity that was now at hand. He describes him, praises his conduct, his singular prudence, and the very great liberality towards personal friends, that proved so advantageous to the increase of his power. He had at first been in favour of the war against Lucca, but now that, under Albizzi's mismanagement, it had turned out badly, Cosimo held his tongue and allowed all the odium to fall upon the former. Barbadori had discovered his deceit, but failed to persuade Niccolò da Uzzano³ to join the Albizzi and drive Cosimo dei Medici from the city. In the narration of this visit to Uzzano, based on details given by Cavalcanti, Machiavelli omits the speech of Barbadori, but copies, with the usual modifications, that of Uzzano, adding nothing but a few reflections of his own.

¹ "Opere," vol. i. p. 235. In Cavalcanti the speech is attributed to the Florence mob, instead of to the men of Serravezza, and begins thus: "We knew that no wolf ever gave birth to a lamb; and therefore we might have expected that a man descended from so shameful a stock would partake of the nature of his progenitors and be sanguinary," &c. (Cavalcanti, bk. vi. chap. xi.).

² "Opere," vol. i. pp. 236, 237; Cavalcanti, bk. vi. chaps. xiii. and xiv. According to Machiavelli the two commissaries were both at the camp at the same time, and this seems to have been the fact. But according to Cavalcanti, Albizzi was sent to take the place of Gianni. However, all that is alleged against the latter by Cavalcanti and copied by Machiavelli, may at least be said to be grossly exaggerated. *Vide* Gino Capponi, "Storia della Repubblica di Firenze," vol. i. p. 496 and fol., and the "Commissioni" of Rinaldo degli Albizzi, published by the Deputazione di Storia Patria, in 3 vols., Florence, 1867, 1869, 1873.

³ Machiavelli says, in speaking of this visit of Barbadori to Uzzano, that "he went to seek him in his own house where the latter dwelt in his study absorbed in thought" ("Opere," vol. i. p. 244). Cavalcanti says that Niccolò had withdrawn from human intercourse into the solitude of his study, and the gravest confusions bewildered his mind. . . . He was using his hand as a pillow for chin and cheek," &c. (vol. i. bk. vii. chap. vi. p. 380).

"And it would be well for thee, for thy house, and for our Republic, that thou and all those of thy opinion should have beards of silver rather than gold, for then their advice, as proceeding from hoary and experienced heads, might be wiser and more useful to each one of you."¹ "Our party is styled by you the party of the nobles; but if that be so, I may remind you that in Florence the nobles were always vanquished by the people. And what is now worse, we are divided and our adversaries united.² And Cosimo has benefited the people in a thousand ways." "Accordingly you would have to give your reasons for expelling him, since he is pitiful, helpful, liberal, and beloved of all. Have the kindness to tell me what law prohibits or even blames and condemns piety, liberty, and love amongst men?³ And although all these may be means to carry men flying to supreme power, nevertheless they are not so considered, and we cannot avail to make people understand it, because our own ways have deprived us of belief." "Certainly, difficult as it would be to expel Cosimo, yet with the aid of a well-disposed Signory, it might be accomplished. Very soon, however, he would return," "and all you would have gained reduced to this, that he would have been driven away a good man and restored to us a bad one; for his nature would be corrupted by those who assisted to restore him, and whom he would be unable to oppose on account of his obligations to them."⁴ This, in fact, was precisely what occurred, and might

¹ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 244-248. This is the opening of a speech according to Cavalcanti: "Niccolò, Niccolò Barbadori, would to God that thou couldst with reason be called Barba argenti! insomuch as it might signify that you were an aged veteran, in whom true judgment and excellent prudence might be found" (vol. i. bk. vii. chap. viii. p. 382).

² Here, likewise, Machiavelli imitates Cavalcanti, who writes: "We are not agreed either as to our mind or intentions" (bk. vii. chap. viii. p. 383); and then he, too, alludes to the many Florentine dissensions, in which the nobles were always worsted.

³ "What crime or what motives could be alleged against this man, so that the people should quietly submit to his undoing?" &c. (Cavalcanti, vol. i. p. 386).

⁴ "He will go away entirely good, and return entirely different; inasmuch as he will necessarily be obliged to change his nature and habits, in consequence of the iniquity of his expulsion, which would overthrow every just method of political life. And less of his own fault than because he would be urged by the incitements of bad men; inasmuch as he would go away a free man, and return under obligations to every member of the sect of *arrabbiati*, to whom, on account of the benefits received from them, in their recalling him to his country, he would be compelled, by force of gratitude, to promise and to bestow assistance in the accomplishment of their iniquities" (Cavalcanti, vol. i. bk. vii. chap. viii. p. 386).

easily have been foreseen by the sagacious. Therefore Machiavelli has been greatly praised for this concluding remark, which, as well as nearly all the rest of the speech, was borrowed from Cavalcanti.

Niccolò da Uzzano died, and Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Cosimo dei Medici remained in conflict, and with their respective adherents once more kept the city divided. "Whenever," writes Machiavelli, still borrowing from Cavalcanti, "a magistrate was about to be elected, it was publicly declared how many were of this, and how many of that party, and the whole city was in a ferment every time the names of a new Signory were drawn. No case, however trifling, could be brought before the magistrates without being converted into a party struggle; secrets were divulged; both good and evil went by favour; honest men were attacked as virulently as bad; no magistrate fulfilled his duty."¹ Again, when Bernardo Guadagni, one of Albizzi's friends, was about to be elected Gonfalonier, the latter, to prevent the annulling of the election, provided him with money for the taxes that he had not yet been able to pay,² and begged him to profit by his new position to obtain the expulsion of Cosimo dei Medici, whose power was still on the increase. Even in reporting this speech Machiavelli gives us a very faithful summary of the account to be found in Cavalcanti. "He reminded Guadagni that if Messer Salvestro dei Medici had been able to curb the power of the Guelphs, who were entitled to the government for which they had shed their blood, he (Guadagni) might justly do to one man that which had been unjustly done to so many.³ He bade him fear nothing, since his friends would defend him by force, and Cosimo would gain no more from the mob that now seemed to adore him than had Messer Giorgio Scali; nor was there anything to be feared on the score of his wealth, since, on being seized by the Signory, his possessions likewise would fall into their hands. In short, this deed would ensure the safety and unity of the Republic, and confer glory on himself."⁴

¹ "Opere," vol. i. p. 248. Cavalcanti says: "And directly any nomination had to be made to some principal office of the State, every one in the city calculated how many there were of the one party, how many of the other. . . . And no Signory could be elected, without the whole city being in a turmoil," &c. (vol. i. p. 494). "And no case, whether just or unjust, useful or hurtful, could be judged by any tribunal without the two parties of the citizens struggling for the upper hand: and it was in this way that our poor little city was governed" (Ibid., p. 495). ² "Opere," vol. i. p. 248; Cavalcanti, vol. i. bk. ix. chap. iii.

³ The identical idea is to be found in Cavalcanti, vol. i. p. 503.

⁴ And in Cavalcanti: "We will secretly provide ourselves with armed

From Cavalcanti, too, is derived the whole account of the imprisonment, exile, and triumphant return of Cosimo, not only as regards its general outline, but down to its minutest details and expressions.¹ Many incidents in Cavalcanti are by Machiavelli, but there is hardly anything in the latter's work that is not to be found in the former's. The very words of reproof that, at the end of this book, Albizzi, when sentenced to exile, hurls against Pope Eugenius IV., are derived from the same source.² Machiavelli, however, always added something of his own, not merely the marvellous style that wrought so magical a change, but the logical connection and profound intuition of events. It is only from his pages that we learn why times of war raised the Albizzi and the Greater Guilds to power, times of peace on the contrary the Lesser Guilds; how the Medici were always lurking as it were in ambuscade behind these latter, currying favour with the lower classes, and always making a show of favouring them, in order to trample on them all afterwards. In this way he has transmuted Cavalcanti's diffuse and tedious narrative into a new and original history, revealing the secret arts of the Medici. For the earlier work is abominably ill-written; the gravest events and most insignificant details are all treated alike in it, and being given one after the other, without any order or connection, are thus deprived of their special meaning and historical value. On this account it is highly useful to establish a comparison between the two works, and we have thought it our duty to devote much time and space to the task.

followers, advising thee that all veteran politicians are worshipping thee with clasped hands. They will carry arms hidden under their cloaks for the defence of justice" (vol. i. p. 504). "Be afraid of nothing, and less than all of the populace; for every multitude is lost without a head. . . . Follow the example of Messer Giorgio Scali" (Ibid., p. 505). "Again, the riches will not remain in the pocket of him who would spend them; inasmuch as they may be taken from him, as soon as you have him in your power. . . . Your glory will ring through the city: writers will heap glory and fame upon you" (Ibid., p. 506).

¹ "Opere," vol. i. pp. 253-260; Cavalcanti, vol. i. bk. ix. chaps. xxiii.-xxv., and xxviii.; bk. x. chaps. i.-v., and xix.

² In Machiavelli ("Opere," vol. i. p. 259), Albizzi says: "But I blame myself more than any other, since I held the belief that you, who had once been driven from your country, would have been able to keep me in mine." In Cavalcanti (vol. i. p. 608) the speech stands thus: "I heartily blame myself for trusting to the promises of one who has been unequal to helping himself, inasmuch as he who is impotent in his own cause will never be potent in that of another."



CHAPTER XIV.

The "Florentine Histories"—Books v. and vi., or the triumph of the Medici and the Italian wars—Books vii. and viii., or Lorenzo dei Medici and the conspiracies—The "Historical Fragments"—"Extracts from Letters to the Ten of Balìa"—The rough sketch of the "Histories."



THE four following books constitute the third and last part of the "Storie," and are not very well arranged. Machiavelli should now have touched upon the despotism of the Medici, and the manner in which they wrought the destruction of liberty. But this was a theme that bristled with difficulties for him. Even while lauding their merits, he must have harshly censured their political conduct ; and to do this with the requisite freedom was altogether impossible in a work dedicated to Clement VII. On the 30th of August, 1524, he wrote to Guicciardini : " I am in the country working at my history, and I would pay ten *soldi*—I will not say more—to be able to consult you ; for I have reached a point upon which your opinion would be thankfully received, namely : Whether I give too much offence by my praise or my blame. Nevertheless, I shall do my best to speak the truth, without giving any one cause for complaint.¹ In the fifth and sixth books he pauses to say a great deal of the Florentine, and, indeed, of the Italian wars in general, and expresses still stronger condemnation of the captains of adventure, in order to insist that they were the cause of Italy's ruin. From time to time he

¹ " Opere," vol. viii. p. 165, letter liii.

reverts to home events, for which he still uses Cavalcanti as an authority ; but soon quits them to resume the subject of the wars. And in their recital he sometimes refers to Flavio Biondo, at others to Gino Capponi and Simonetta, who had often been eye-witnesses of the battles in question.

After some allusions to his own well-known theories on the rise and decline of States, he remarks that in every human society military leaders and military deeds are the first to become famous, and next philosophy and letters. "Arms bring victory, victory quiet, nor can the strength of men's minds be more honestly corrupted than by means of letters. Italy likewise underwent these vicissitudes, being happy and miserable in turn with the Etruscans and Romans. And although, since the ruin of the Empire, nothing has been done towards her redemption, towards her performing glorious deeds under the rule of a virtuous prince, although she has never succeeded in achieving true unity, nevertheless, she once had sufficient valour to resist the barbarians. Afterwards came times of peace without tranquillity, and war without peril. For princes and States often attacked one another ; but we cannot apply the name of wars to quarrels in which no men were killed, no cities sacked, no kingdoms destroyed. These affairs, in fact, began without alarm, were pursued without danger, completed without injury. And thus military valour, extinguished elsewhere by long-enduring peace, was extinguished among us by wars of the above kind, as will be shown by what we shall have to say of the period between 1434 and 1494, when again barbarians were admitted, and again bound Italy in their chains." "And if in this account of subsequent events in this lower world there will be no tales to tell of the bravery of soldiers, the skill of captains, or the devotion of citizens to their country ; at least, we can relate by what frauds, by what wiles and tricks, princes, soldiers, and heads of republics, contrived to maintain the reputation of which they were unworthy."¹ This is the introduction to the fifth book.

Machiavelli then begins to speak of the two different schools of Italian arms, the one headed by Francesco Sforza, the other by Niccolò Fortebraccio and Niccolò Piccinini. He gives a hasty, incomplete, and far from exact account of their enterprises in the States of the Church after the year 1433,² and always with the

¹ "Opere," vol. ii. pp. 1-4.

² Machiavelli says that Sforza and Fortebraccio went to skirmish in the States

single intent of proclaiming the evil nature of similar wars, and their ruinous effects upon Italy and freedom. He vents these opinions spasmodically, now hastily reverting to the internal affairs of Florence, and again putting them aside with equal haste.

Cosimo's triumphant return, and the persecutions that quickly ensued, inspire the author with certain remarks serving to reveal his true opinion of those events, and why he shrank from their narration. "Not only by party hatreds were the citizens injured at that time; but wealth, family ties, and private enmities also combined to their hurt. And had these proscriptions been accompanied by bloodshed, they would have resembled those of Octavian and Scylla. As it was, some taint of blood rested on them, for Bernardo Guadagni and certain other citizens were beheaded."¹ The magistrates were not changed, but their functions were altered, and their political authority was lessened. By means of the Balie it was contrived that the new elections should have favourable results for the Medici; such being ever the art of government practised by that family.² This fifth book tells us little more of the internal history of Florence, and again recurs to the narrative of the principal Italian wars.³

In fact, he now shifts the scene from Florence to Naples, relating

of the Church on their own account, because they were unable to live without making war; but the truth was, that they were sent there by the secret command of Filippo Maria Visconti. Machiavelli mentions among other matters ("Opere," vol. iii. p. 5) a treaty of peace arranged between Sforza and Fortebraccio, by means of Visconti, who was never a peace-maker, but only a promoter of warfare. He adds that Sforza, by way of marking his contempt for the Pope, always dated his letters: *Ex Girifalco nostro firmiano, invitis Petro et Paulo* ("Opere," vol. ii. p. 5). But I am not aware that these words exist in any document, nor are they recorded by other historians. Rubieri reasonably remarks, that even if employed by Sforza, it must have been at a later date than that supposed by Machiavelli; because in the years 1433, 1435 Sforza had no cause for anger against the Pope. E. Rubieri, "Francesco Sforza, Narrazione storica." Florence, Le Monnier, 1879, two vols. Vol. i. p. 225, note 2; and p. 342, note 2.

¹ "Opere," vol. ii. p. 8; Cavalcanti, bk. x. chaps. 21-25.

² Ibid., vol. ii. p. 9; Cavalcanti, bk. x. chap. 20.

³ We may here mention the authorities used by Machiavelli when writing of these wars. *Johannis Simonetæ, "Historia de rebus gestis Francisci Primi Sfortiæ vicecomitis Mediolanensium ducis,"* published in Muratori's "*Rerum italicarum Scriptores*," vol. xxi. Flavio Biondo's history, which is the best authority, particularly as to the wars carried on in the States of the Church during this period. *Vide Deca. iii. chaps. v. and vi.* The "*Commentarii di Neri di Gino Capponi*" (1419-1456), in Muratori's "*Rerum italicarum Scriptores*," vol. xviii. The "*Cacciata del Conte di Poppi*," also by Capponi, in the same volume of Muratori.

the death of Joan II., the coming of Alfonso of Aragon, and the war waged by that prince against the Genoese, who captured him and his two brothers, and gave them up to Filippo Maria Visconti, by whose orders they had fought. At this point Cavalcanti invents a strange and absurd harangue, supposed to be uttered by the Duke at the moment of giving his prisoners their release, and overwhelming them with rhetorical, inflated, and empty compliments.¹ Machiavelli, on the contrary, assigns a speech to Alfonso of Aragon, who by skilful reasoning persuades the Duke to set him at liberty. I am not aware that this speech has any foundation on fact; but it contains the real motives which in Machiavelli's opinion must have decided the Duke to free his prisoners as he actually did. "It was more dangerous for the Duke than for any one else," so the king must have told him, "to allow the Angevins to triumph in Naples through the captivity of the Aragonese. Milan would thus have the French both to north and south, and the Duke would be at their mercy. Hence no one could have a greater interest than himself in promoting the victory of the Aragonese in Naples, unless indeed he should prefer the gratification of a caprice to the safety of his State."²

Then came the rebellion of the Genoese, who were enraged by having fought in vain, and compelled to convey back the liberated Aragonese on board their own vessels; and afterwards ensued the alliance between Genoa, Florence, and Venice against Milan, which was defended by the forces of Niccolò Piccinini.³ At this point Machiavelli begins to make use of the "Commentarii" of Neri Capponi, relying on them even for his narrative of the wars between Sforza and Piccinini.⁴ He then passes to the adventures of

¹ According to Cavalcanti, the Duke's speech began thus: "Oh most serene kings, oh most gentle lords, oh most illustrious knights, you are no captives, but rather the captors of our love," &c. (vol. ii. bk. ix. chap. v. p. 11).

² "Opere," vol. ii. p. 11.

³ Ibid., vol. ii. p. 11 and fol.; Flavio Biondo, Deca. iii. bk. vii. p. 503 and fol.

⁴ Let the reader compare the terms in which Machiavelli ("Opere," vol. vii. pp. 37-40) relates the reception of Capponi by the Venetian Senate, with the account given by Capponi of the same incident in his "Commentarii." (Muratori, "Rer. ital.," vol. xviii. col. 188, 189.) Even from the description of the various routes that Sforza might have followed, it is clear that Machiavelli relies upon Capponi. A little further on the latter (col. 190 D.) speaks of Piccinini's defeat by Sforza, near Brescia, and tells how the former fled through the camp borne on the shoulders of a Slavonian. In order to make the story more romantic Machiavelli tells us (vol. ii. p. 44) that Piccinini had a very strong German servant, whom he persuaded to put him in a sack, and, as if laden with fighting gear, bear him

the celebrated and haughty Cardinal Vitelleschi,¹ gleaned from Flavio Biondo, and soon pauses to give an account of the battle of Anghiari, provoked and won by the Florentines by means of their hired troops, against the forces of Piccinini, who fought for Visconti. Here again the author lets himself be carried away by his desire to speak ill of soldiers of adventure. Although able to refer to noted authors giving minute and faithful accounts of the battle, he disregards their testimony in order to indulge in almost incredible exaggeration. While compelled to admit that Piccinini was utterly beaten, he adds that, "in so complete a defeat, so prolonged a conflict, lasting from twenty to twenty-four hours, none perished save one man, who died, not from his wounds or other worthy hurts, but by being thrown and crushed by his own horse." The captains would not pursue the enemy, actually released its men-at-arms, against the will of the Florentine Commissaries, and contrary to every good rule of war, and then went off to Arezzo to deposit their spoils. Therefore it is only astonishing that the enemy should have been cowardly enough to let itself be defeated by an army of that sort."² However, the writers of the period say nothing of all this. Capponi, one of the Commissaries in camp, makes great complaints of the army; but declares that the enemy was pursued to its entrenchments, and that 1,540 prisoners were taken. Then, in speaking of the care the Florentines were obliged to bestow on their wounded, he plainly makes us understand that the battle had not been altogether bloodless.³ Flavio Biondo, also an excellent authority as to this period, speaks of sixty killed, and four hundred wounded, on the Duke's side; of two hundred wounded, and ten killed, on that of the Florentines; besides six hundred horses of this and the other army, shot down by the artillery. He farther adds that Captain Astorre Manfredi was made prisoner after being wounded.⁴ Bracciolini says that the enemy had forty dead and many wounded.⁵

After recounting the taking of the Casentino, thanks to the efforts

through the enemy's camp, where no watch was kept, and thus secure his escape. In fact the German, "having hoisted him on his shoulders, and being disguised as a porter, passed through the whole camp without any hindrance, and brought him in safety to his own men."

¹ Deca. iv. bk. i. p. 563 and fol.

² "Opere," vol. ii. pp. 65, 66.

³ Capponi, "Commentarii," col. 1195.

⁴ Biondo, &c., in the single book of Deca. iv.

⁵ Poggii, "Historia Fiorentina," bk. vii. p. 349, Venetiis, 1715. See also Gino Capponi, "Storia della Repubblica di Firenze," vol. ii. p. 23, and note 1.

of Commissary Capponi,¹ and the death of Rinaldo degli Albizzi, Machiavelli concludes the fifth book, and begins the sixth by an introduction in which he reiterates his laments on the manner in which wars were then conducted. He relates the deeds of arms in Lombardy between Piccinini, who was in the service of the Duke, and Sforza, who first fought for Venice and the Florentines, and then changing sides, served under the Duke against Piccinini, who had also changed his flag. He now suddenly reverts to the affairs of Florence, narrating how Cosimo had lived in the greatest rivalry and jealousy with Neri Capponi, and Baldaccio d'Anghiari, and how the latter was treacherously put to death, and hurled from the palace windows.² Cavalcanti and Machiavelli assign the entire blame³ of this deed to Cosimo's friends; but Guicciardini declares, and perhaps with greater truth, that the prime instigator of the murder was Cosimo himself, who succeeded in ridding himself of one enemy, and enfeebling another, in such wise that none could accuse him of guilt.⁴

Then—for this book sins against unity as much as the preceding one—the narrative of the Lombard wars is again resumed and carried down to the death of the Duke without heirs: the event so long anticipated by Sforza, his captain and rival. Machiavelli now digresses into a sketch of the history of the Ambrosian Republic and its capital blunder in choosing for its captain one like Sforza, who shamelessly betrayed it, by striking it down with the weapons hired for its defence.⁵ With Simonetta's history before his eyes, he nevertheless, in his enmity to Sforza, the destroyer of a republic, gives an arbitrary colouring to the ugly tale,⁶ without even doing justice to the political and military

¹ In this latter portion of bk. v. ("Opere," vol. ii. p. 60 and fol.), Machiavelli not only makes use of Capponi's "Commentarii" (*Vide* "Commentarii," col. 1194, C. D.), but also of the "Cacciata del Conte di Poppi," by the same writer, and published in Muratori, after the "Commentarii." In this (Muratori, vol. xviii. col. 1220) we find the dialogue between the Count of Poppi and Capponi, also quoted by Machiavelli. ("Opere," vol. ii. p. 69.) Aretino's history ends with the battle of Anghiari. Cavalcanti, without describing the battle of Anghiari, passes to the death of Albizzi. The intermediate events are only in part narrated by Cavalcanti in the printed fragments of that which Polidori styles the "Seconda Storia."

² "Opere," vol. ii. pp. 81-83.

³ Cavalcanti, vol. ii. p. 161; "Opere," vol. ii. pp. 82-84.

⁴ "Storia Fiorentina," in vol. iii. of "Opere Inedite," p. 8.

⁵ "Historia de rebus gestis Fr. Sfortiæ," &c., in Muratori, vol. xxi. pp. 485-598 and fol.

⁶ His blunders are various. For instance, he tells us ("Opere," vol. ii. p. 98) that the Duke of Savoy was fighting for the Duke of Orleans, whereas he was a

genius of that leader. And to enhance the strangeness of the whole narrative, he puts in the mouths of the representatives of the betrayed Republic an eloquent discourse, of a kind that they would never have dared to address to Sforza ; but which clearly demonstrates the opinion of his conduct, and the love of liberty by which Machiavelli was always inspired. Coming to the camp of the victorious traitor, the Milanese deputation are supposed to have addressed him in the following terms : "It were useless for us to employ supplications, promises, or threats, since these have no effect upon powerful and cruel men. But now that we are acquainted with thy ambition and cruelty, we would only remind thee of the benefits which thou hast received from the Milanese, in order thus to prove thy ingratitude, and taste some pleasure by casting it in thy teeth. We took thee into our service when thou wert forsaken by all, and instantly thou didst begin to betray us. For thou hast not waited until now to lay bare thy iniquitous soul ; but showed signs of it when first in command of our forces, by accepting the surrender of Pavia in thine own name. It was doubtless an error to place our trust in one who had so often played the traitor ; but although our scanty prudence may accuse us, it cannot excuse thy perfidy, and thou shouldst judge thyself worthy of the punishment awarded to parricides."¹

This is the principal episode in the fifth and sixth books, and, in spite of their disorderly arrangement, serves to emphasize their aim and to give them unity. Sforza's career, in fact, and the means by which he grasped the lordship of Milan, first undermining the power of the Duke, and then perfidiously betraying the Republic, afford the clearest possible exemplification of the little confidence that could be placed in captains of adventure. After this Machiavelli narrates other wars, and thus nears the end of the sixth book, concluding it by an account of the events occurring in the kingdom of Naples down to the death of Alfonso of Aragon and Ferrante's accession to the throne.

He opens the seventh book with excuses for having strayed too far into the general history of Italy ; alleging that it seemed indispensable for the better explanation of that of Florence, to

combatant on his own account ; that Sforza wished to cross the Adda to attack the Brescian territory, and places Brescia and Caravaggio on opposite sides of the river (p. 99), whereas both are situated on the left bank. And it was Gismondo Malatesta who was captain of the Venetians, not Pandolfo as asserted by Machiavelli.

¹ "Opere," vol. ii. pp. 103-106.

which he now recurs for a short space, with some fresh reflections, by way of preface, on the methods by which the Medici found their way to absolute power through the confusion of party strife.

"In all cities parties are inevitable; but party leaders may become influential and powerful by public or by private courses. When a campaign or an embassy is accomplished in praiseworthy fashion, or when useful counsels are proffered to the Republic, then a man rises by public courses, renders service to his country, and will readily find friends and adherents. When benefits or favours are bestowed on private individuals, and gratifications in the form of money or office; when the people are treated to amusements and public festivities, then men rise by private courses, and gain partizans who create sects, the which never fail to produce evil. A wise legislator will always seek to crush sects, even if divisions cannot be altogether avoided. Neri Capponi attained power solely by public measures; Cosimo dei Medici both by public and private measures, and accordingly gained not only friends but partizans, who formed themselves into a sect. This remained more or less united from 1434 to 1455, and during those twenty-one years, succeeded, by means of the Balle, in rising no fewer than six times to the head of affairs. But after Capponi's death (1455) there was a split among the partizans of the Medici, some again desiring the Balìa, others election by ballot. The former carried the day, and thereupon the sect became more powerful and audacious than before. This government, which lasted eight years, was insupportable and violent, for Cosimo, being old and weary, allowed his adherents to do as they would, without restraint, and his friend Luca Pitti thought of nothing but the construction of his palace, and accepted contributions from every one."¹

Cosimo's death took place in 1464, and Machiavelli was necessarily obliged to insert an eulogium on him. He accordingly says, that Cosimo afforded an unique example of power achieved in a free city, without violence and by prudence and astuteness alone. He succeeded in holding the State for thirty-one years, turning both the internal divisions of the city as well as its external wars to his own advantage, inasmuch as he could discern danger from afar, and prepared his remedies in good time. Machiavelli likewise alludes to Cosimo's patronage of letters and the arts; but even at this point he shows no inclination

¹ "Opere," vol. ii. p. 147.

to enlarge on the subject of the new culture then initiated in Florence, and in the promotion of which the Medici had so large a share. Then, being neither able nor willing to say all that he thought of Cosimo's political character, he winds up by reporting a few of his sayings, which certainly furnish a sufficiently clear idea of the *Pater Patriæ* even in his least praiseworthy aspects :—States are not to be ruled by paternosters.—A worthy man may be made with two ells of crimson cloth.¹—This latter dictum was Cosimo's reply to those who accused him of admitting men of little worth into the palace and offices of the State. His meaning was, that if you gave any one enough red cloth for an official mantle, or *lucco*, he would be as respectable as any other citizen.

Machiavelli's history now enters upon a new theme, forming the principal subject of its two last books. Italian society was becoming more and more corrupt ; despotism triumphed on all sides ; war was conducted in an increasingly scandalous fashion ; the only protests, only signs of energy and love of liberty, consisting in the many conspiracies hatched during those years. Therefore conspiracies and the devices by which tyrants sought to defend themselves against their own subjects are the chief topics of the narrative. The events that Machiavelli had henceforth to relate were to be found recorded in many contemporary histories, and were fresh in the memories of all men. For this reason it would be superfluous to make an investigation of his authorities. He told of events known and repeated by all ; he sometimes studied the accounts given by others, and even confirmatory documents ; he sometimes trusted to his own memory. What specially engaged his attention was the analysis of the passions and feelings animating the conspirators, whose doings he describes and represents with an eloquence and force rendering certain of these pages some of the finest in his history. But here, also, for the better accomplishment of his design, he does not scruple to occasionally arrange facts and invent speeches according to his own taste.

He starts by narrating the end of Jacopo Piccinini, who, encouraged thereto by Sforza, left Milan for Naples, where he was perfidiously murdered by Ferrante of Aragon. Machiavelli unhesitatingly attributes this crime to the concerted treachery of two Italian princes who, even as their colleagues, "feared in others the valour they had not in themselves, and crushed it so utterly

¹ "Opere," vol. ii. pp. 148-155.

that it ceased to exist in any man, the which later proved the cause of the general ruin."¹ Guicciardini, on the other hand, is more cautious in his judgments, and remarks that even if the agreement—always indignantly denied by Sforza—was actually made, it was impossible to ascertain the fact with any certainty, because the two sovereigns would never have concluded it in a way that could become patent to others."²

Then follows the plot woven in Florence against Piero dei Medici, a weak man both in body and mind, but who on this occasion rose superior to the common expectation. Nevertheless, Machiavelli colours his facts in such-wise as to unduly enhance the prudence and promptitude displayed by Piero. The latter received a note of warning from Ercole Bentivoglio, informing him that his enemies had collected troops and were already on the march to Florence. Thereupon, although in the country and prostrated by sickness, Piero immediately sent off despatches to summon armed adherents to his aid, and, carried on a litter, was conveyed back to the city escorted by his friends. Once within the walls this unexpected promptitude enabled him to set matters straight. But Machiavelli is not satisfied with this plain version of the affair, and to make Piero seem far more sagacious than he really was, pretends that the latter, being aware that a plot was on foot against him, only feigned to have received a letter from Bentivoglio, as a pretext for suddenly taking arms. Nevertheless, his unfaithfulness to history in favour of the Medicean acumen does not preclude him from censuring the conduct of Piero and his friends in persecuting his adversaries so fiercely, "that it seemed as though God had delivered this city as a prey into their hands."³ It is impossible to suppose that similar blunders were always involuntary, for we often find proofs to the contrary. In fact, shortly afterwards, the exiles, desiring to return to Florence, applied for Piero's permission. Among others, Angelo Acciaiuoli wrote to him from Sienna, asking pardon in somewhat ironical and almost offensive terms, and Piero replied, refusing pardon, but in a courteous and sufficiently dignified tone. Both letters are still extant, and Machiavelli had undoubtedly seen them, for he gives certain portions of them verbatim, while altering the rest so as to make Acciaiuoli appear

¹ "Opere," vol. ii. p. 158.

² Guicciardini, "Storia Fiorentina," p. 17 and fol.

³ "Opere," vol. ii. p. 177.

humbler, Piero harder and more cynical than was really the case.¹ The latter was positively eccentric sometimes, and then yielded solely to the caprices of his fancy.

Hence Ammirato is not altogether wrong, when, on reaching this point in his "*Storie Fiorentine*," he loses patience, and after indicating various errors in Machiavelli's work, declares that the latter changes names and years, adds, takes away, diminishes, and what is worse, not always by mistake, but of set purpose and to enhance the eloquence of his narrative.² In fact, in describing a little later on, the battle of Molinella in 1466, between the Venetians and the Florentines, he, as usual, winds up with the following words: "They came to a pitched battle, that went on for half the day without either side giving way. Nevertheless, there were no killed; a few horses only were wounded, and some prisoners taken on either side."³ Ammirato⁴ justly remarks that

¹ The two original letters are printed in Fabroni's "*Vita Laurentii Medicis Magnifici*," vol. ii. p. 36. If compared with those given by Machiavelli ("*Opere*," vol. ii. p. 173 and fol.), it will be seen that while certain phrases are correctly reproduced, all the rest is substantially altered.

² Ammirato had some justification in saying this; but he exaggerated, because he entirely failed to grasp the historical value of Machiavelli's work: he only praised its style, and blamed everything else in it, including the language. *Vide* what he says in the "*Ritratti*," published in the second volume of his "*Opuscoli*." Meanwhile, this is what the same author writes of Machiavelli in his "*Storia*," bk. xxiii. vol. v. p. 169 (Florence, Batelli, 1846-1849): "He makes it appear that the Duke Francesco died after the gonfalonierate of Niccolò Soderini, and that Piero dei Medici was alive after the death of Pope Paul. He attributes to Luca Pitti that which appertained to Roberto Sostegni, names Bardo Altoviti as Gonfalonier of justice after Ruberto Lioni, who never held that post. In short, he changes years, alters names, twists facts, confounds causes, increases, adds, takes away, diminishes, and does anything that suits his fancy, without check, without any lawful restraint, and what is still more tiresome, in many places it would seem that he does all this rather of set purpose than because he is mistaken, or is ignorant that those things happened otherwise, and perhaps he did them in order to make his writing finer or to relieve it from tedium."

Gino Capponi, in his "*Storia della Repubblica di Firenze*" (vol. ii. p. 88, note 2 and elsewhere), also recognizes that Ammirato is right, and adds that Bruto, who lived a century later than Machiavelli, wrote that he only followed him when absolutely compelled to do so, because he so frequently found him incorrect.

³ "*Opere*," vol. ii. p. 178.

⁴ This is the account given by Ammirato, vol. v. bk. xxii. p. 178: "Both parties fought with incredible valour until nightfall, with the loss on either side of three hundred men-at-arms, and four hundred horses, if we may believe the writer of the "*Life of Coglione*" (Bartolommeo Colleone). The writer on the affairs of Ferrara numbers the slain at one thousand. Some memoirs in my possession give the number as eight hundred, of whom the greater part were Venetians. Machia-

there was gross exaggeration in this, inasmuch as all writers of the period speak of about several hundred slain, and Guicciardini says outright that the battle was "a gallant deed of arms."¹

After this Machiavelli returns to the subject of conspiracies. A Florentine exile, one Bernardo Nardi, in concert with Diotisalvi Neroni, went to Prato to rouse that place to revolt against Florence, and Lorenzo and Giuliano dei Medici, who had now succeeded to Piero. In recounting this affair, Machiavelli describes a scene unnoticed by other writers, and of little apparent credibility. He tells us that Nardi seized the Podestà, and was on the point of hanging him by the neck from the palace window, when the latter, with the halter already about him, pronounced so logical and well reasoned a speech, accompanied by so many promises, that Nardi was induced to set him at liberty.² But the moment the Podestà was at large, the conspiracy collapsed and Nardi's head was cut off. The truth was that the enterprise failed at the beginning because the people refused to rise, and the representative of the Florentine government had no difficulty in overcoming and punishing the rebels.

After the rebellion, surrender, and most inhuman sack of Volterra, Machiavelli comes to the principal episode of the seventh book, namely the conspiracy against Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Duke of Milan, that broke out in 1476. This is described with much vigour, and its style rises in intensity towards the tragic close of the sanguinary drama. With the touch of a Tacitus, the author depicts the vices of the Duke, who injured every one, insulted every one, making public boast of the women he had dishonoured, and records the fierce hatred against his tyranny raging in his victims' minds. While composing this narrative, Machiavelli must certainly have made himself acquainted with the daring confession of Olgiati, afterwards published by Corio, and accordingly gives a very truthful and remarkably enthusiastic description of the ardour of this youth and his two companions, and of how they were stirred to conspiracy by the Latin authors they had studied with their master, Niccolò Montano. Their preliminary speeches and preparations, their zealous training in the art of dealing quick and forcible blows with sheathed daggers, and above all the strange mixture of

velli, with his customary sneers at the expense of hired troops, says that no one was killed. By Sabellico, this battle is styled very sanguinary, although he does not give the number of the slain."

¹ "Storia Fiorentina," p. 22.

² "Opere," vol. ii. pp. 187, 188.

pagan hatred against tyranny, and the Christian sentiment with which they sought to justify that hate, are all rendered and held up to our view with so much graphic power as to afford a most vivid and accurate perception of the modes of thought and feeling of the period. In these respects, nothing comparable with this passage can well be found in any other writer, whether of ancient or modern times. And Machiavelli surpasses himself, when, after the murder of the Duke in church, he describes the heroic end of Olgiati, the only one of the conspirators who survived the first outburst of popular wrath. When subjected to torture, this youth, as it is even recorded in the documents of his trial, invoked the aid of the Virgin, and strode undauntedly to the scaffold, declaiming Latin couplets in praise of liberty.¹ Certainly Italian prose could hardly furnish specimens of a more vigorous and eloquent style than that attained by Machiavelli at this point.

Nevertheless, he was equal to a still higher flight. The eighth book is a sequel to the seventh, and pursues the same theme. Having already explained in the "Discourse" his general views on conspiracy, the author now, without any preamble, dashes into the history of the Pazzi plot that broke out in Florence in the year 1478. For this was the central point, the climax of the series of dark and sanguinary deeds recorded in the two concluding volumes of the "Histories." It had been already narrated by Poliziano and other eye-witnesses, and was, therefore, well known to all Florence. Machiavelli must have certainly questioned more than one of those who were present at its occurrence, and read the confession of Montesecco, one of the conspirators,² which was made public four months after the event, and is also recorded by Guicciardini.³ The narrative of so famous a plot allowed no scope for capricious variations; accordingly, it is not only an exact and faithful account, but also a true masterpiece of style. Once or twice the author is carried away by his own eloquence, and adds a few minor details of his own invention; but as he makes no change in essential facts, this only serves to dress them in livelier tints. Here and there the vivid and forcible narrative is interrupted by brief reflections, but these parentheses enhance rather than lessen its effect.

Montesecco, who was a soldier of fortune, refused to take part in

¹ "Opere," vol. ii. pp. 198-203.

² So says Ammirato, and so, too, may be inferred from Machiavelli's own narrative. *Vide* Capponi, "Storia," &c. vol. ii. p. 113, note 1.

³ "Storia Fiorentina," p. 42.

the execution of the plot, on learning that Lorenzo and Giuliano were to be stabbed in the Duomo at the moment of the elevation of the host. He would not add sacrilege to treason. Two other men were therefore chosen in haste, and one of these being a priest, it was thought that he might have fewer scruples, by reason of his greater familiarity with consecrated things. But on the contrary, this man proved the ruin of the enterprise, "inasmuch as, more than in any other affair, a great and steadfast mind inured by experience to matters of life and death is indispensable to business of this kind, wherein even men skilled in war and stained with blood have very often been found to lack courage."¹ Machiavelli is absolutely unrivalled in his description of the conspirators, who, to ensure striking both their destined victims at the same moment, go to seek Giuliano and escort him to the cathedral. "It is truly a noteworthy matter, that so great a hatred, so fixed a resolve to commit so monstrous an excess, could be so courageously and persistently concealed by Francesco (Pazzi) and Bernardo (Bandini). For in conducting him to the temple, they entertained him by the way, and even in the church, with merry jests and youthful chatter. Nor, while feigning to caress him, did Francesco forget to press him in his arms, in order to ascertain whether he were provided with a cuirass or other defensive armour."²

Afterwards, at the destined moment, he threw himself on him, "covered him with wounds; and struck at him with so much determination, that, in the blindness of his fury, he inflicted a serious injury on one of his own legs." Lorenzo had escaped the strokes of the assassins, and Bandini, seeing him still alive after Giuliano was dead, vainly made a desperate rush at him, and killed another who threw himself between them, for Lorenzo had time to save himself by flight into the sacristy. So great was the tumult, that it seemed as though the cathedral were falling.³ The terrific confusion of the crowd, the shrieks, the wounded men, and the pools of blood, are brought vividly before our eyes, and no less graphic is the description of the slaughter committed during the following days by the infuriated populace,

¹ "Opere," vol. ii. p. 214. In the "Discourses," he had already made the identical remark on the same subject. "Forasmuch no man, without previous experience, can be assured of his aptitude for any great deed" ("Discorsi," bk. iii. ch. 6; in the "Opere," vol. iii. p. 331).

² Ibid., vol. ii. pp. 214, 215.

³ "Opere," vol. ii. p. 216. Poliziano, in his "De pactiana coniuratione," says: "Fuerunt et qui crederent templum corruere."

stirred to hotter wrath by Lorenzo dei Medici, who was panting for revenge on the conspirators. Francesco dei Pazzi and others were hung from the windows of the Palazzo Vecchio; his aged kinsman, Jacopo, vainly imploring the help of the people, vainly invoking the name of liberty. "The former had been deafened by the fortune and generosity of the Medici, the latter was no longer known in Florence. . . . The limbs of murdered men were to be seen transfixed on pikes, or dragged through the city ways."¹ Jacopo was captured while seeking to escape over the neighbouring hills, nor would the country folk hearken to him when he begged them to kill him for pity's sake. Condemned to death and buried in the family tomb, his body was afterwards exhumed as excommunicate and buried near the walls, only to be again disinterred and dragged through the streets of Florence, by the same halter with which he had been hanged. At last the corpse was thrown into the Arno, where it was long to be seen floating, a loathsome spectacle to all men.²

After this most prominent episode, the eighth and last book continues the narrative of other Italian wars and conspiracies, down to the decease of Lorenzo dei Medici in 1492, with which it ends. Machiavelli gives a long description of Lorenzo's character, and has much to say in his praise. He styles him able and fortunate in all things save business matters, which went as badly with him as they had gone well with Cosimo. He alludes in general terms to the public works accomplished by him, to his patronage of letters and art, and to the great reputation in which he was held by all contemporary princes. "The which reputation was daily increased by his own sagacity, for he was eloquent and keen-witted in discourse, wise in resolve, and prompt and courageous in action. Nor can any vice be ascribed to him capable of staining his many virtues, although he was strangely addicted to sensual pleasures, and his delight in the company of facetious and sarcastic men, and in childish diversions was greater than might seem adapted to a person of his consequence."³

These eulogies, although for the most part deserved and universally reiterated, are nevertheless very vague and indefinite, since, without many limitations either expressed or understood, it was impossible for Machiavelli to cherish admiration for one

¹ "Opere," vol. ii. pp. 216 and 219.

² Ibid., vol. ii. p. 220.

³ Ibid., vol. ii. pp. 273, 274.

whose craft had completed the destruction of Florentine liberty, and who had devoted himself to the patronage of artists and *litterati*, when, on the contrary, he should have felt bound to train men for military service. But Guicciardini, who had never experienced any very ardent enthusiasm for the Republic, and who wrote his "Florentine History" in his youth, when the Medici were in banishment and no one foresaw the possibility of their return, was able to speak of Lorenzo with far greater freedom and independence of mind. Accordingly, his portrait of that prince is much more faithful, his judgment on him far more certain and definite. He says that he was a tyrant, but of all tyrants the most amiable. He acknowledges and extols the versatility, elegance and originality of his intellect. As a politician, he deems him inferior to Cosimo, who in circumstances of greater difficulty incurred fewer dangers, and founded a State that Lorenzo was frequently on the verge of losing. The latter was intensely proud, ruled by distrust and espionage, exalted men of scanty merit, abased others of the greatest authority and credit, and promoted corruption. And Guicciardini states all this with the utmost calm, and without ever betraying the least vehemence either for or against liberty, for or against the Medici.¹

Now come the Historical Fragments,² mere disconnected pages intended to be incorporated in succeeding books which were

¹ *Vide* chap. ix. of his "Storia Fiorentina."

² "Opere," vol. i. p. 277 and fol. At p. 340 begins the "Extracts from letters to the Ten of Balla." The editors of the "Opere" (P. M.) have published from the Ricci Codex and the Palatine Manuscripts, a so-called new series of "Estratti di lettere ai Dieci." But without fear of making any blunder, we may say, that at least in so far as Machiavelli is concerned, the publication is entirely useless. The two first "Estratti" ("Opere" (P. M.), vol. ii. pp. 156-160 and 160-166) are really autographs of Machiavelli, and run from 1494 to 1495. But it is scarcely worth while to publish shapeless and very scanty excerpts from letters, or equally shapeless notes, when we are in possession of the "Frammenti" for the same years, with all the preliminary extracts filled out and corrected by numerous fresh details? Two more "Estratti" follow (*Ibid.*, pp. 166, 167, and 167-182) relative to the years 1495 and 1496. These are not written by Machiavelli, but by Agostino di Terranuova, and they are not extracts from letters addressed to the Ten, but memoranda jotted down in the Chancery of the Ten, regarding letters already written, or about to be written. Machiavelli had nothing to do with these, his sole connection with them being that these memoranda were found among his papers. Then, as now, similar memoranda were kept by all *employés* in public offices, and Machiavelli probably found them useful, when he had to ransack the Archives for letters of the Ten. The same may be said of nearly all the succeeding "Estratti."

never completed. On glancing over them, we may easily ascertain in what way they were composed by Machiavelli, and even the method pursued by him in writing the most recent period of his "Histories." The "Fragments" run from 1494 to 1499, and are divided into two parts, the second and more shapeless of which is entitled: "Estratti di lettere ai Dieci di Balìa." It is known that these magistrates had to receive the communications of the war-commissaries and the ambassadors. Machiavelli's "Estratti" were taken from these letters, and are mere memoranda serving for the composition of his "Frammenti," which in their turn are disconnected scraps of the "Storie," and generally narratives of the wars of the Republic. The "Fragments" are very unequal in style; some being almost finished and polished compositions, while others, on the contrary, are still in the first rough stage of sketchiness. Here and there we even meet with the identical phraseology of the letters upon which they were founded. In fact, we often read: *your* soldiery, *your* ambassadors did or said this or that. Elsewhere, we come across simple reminders for the writer's personal use—"Mem.: to ask Francesco Pepi for an answer to this."¹ And naturally there is still more of the negligence of a first sketch in the "Extract" starting from the year 1497, and principally treating of Tuscan matters and the internal policy of the Republic, although barely outlined by the author, who proposes to examine them more carefully at a future time. "On the eighth day of April, 1498, King Charles died of apoplexy, and on the same day occurred the affair of the friar, of which a detailed account must be given."² Elsewhere he refers to projected researches among the letters and documents in the archives: "The whole affair will be found in a letter on the file. There are many letters in file, from which it can be ascertained how and when the enemy's forces came to Marradi."³

This method of composing contemporary histories was then very general. Buonaccorsi's Diary is entirely compiled from official letters to the Ten and the Signory; the Diaries of Marin Sanuto are little more than a gigantic collection of ambassadors' letters and reports, with the addition of many others from private indi-

¹ "Opere," vol. ii. p. 312.

² Ibid., vol. ii. p. 350. This is an allusion to Savonarola, who was hung and burnt on the 23rd of that month. The 7th of April was the day of the abortive ordeal by fire, and then came the news of the death of Charles VIII. on the same date.

³ Ibid., vol. ii. pp. 353 and 361.

viduals. Machiavelli, however, being like Guicciardini, engaged on a history not a diary, was obliged to arrange his materials, and bestow great attention on his style. Hence, after jotting down his memoranda, he worked very carefully upon certain parts of his narrative; then arranged the whole according to a general design, with much re-writing and correction. Even his "Florentine Types—*Nature di nomini fiorentini*," are merely four portraits already written and revised, for subsequent insertion in his "Histories," as is plainly evidenced by their construction,¹ and from one or two of them being already incorporated in the "Fragments."

A thousand other proofs may also be found of the extreme care with which Machiavelli polished his style. Among his manuscripts there is a large portion of a sketch of the "Histories," that seems to have gone through several revisions. It has been recently published, and if we compare it with the printed version of the same work, subsequently revised by the author, we shall see that the final corrections were generally simple alterations of style, and can form an idea of the principle upon which they were made. Machiavelli seldom follows the fashion, then so prevalent among literary men, of using elegant words or phrases in order to render his periods more Latinized than in their primitive shape. On the contrary, his corrections aimed at simplifying his style, and by force of simplicity enhancing its vigour and power.² The spoken language, with all its native freshness, sometimes even with its idiomatic expressions, is never entirely banished from the "Histories," although he endeavours to give it softness, strength, and polish, by the continual study of Latin classics. The marvellous force and originality of his style is mainly derived from the

¹ These are their opening sentences: "Thus died Piero Capponi. In his childhood this man (Antonio Giacomini)—The Orators chosen were Messer Francesco dei Pazzi, bishop of Arezzo, and Messer Francesco Pepi, jurisconsult.—Such was the unworthy end of Francesco Pepi."—The portrait of Capponi was already introduced in one of the "Frammenti," although in a less finished shape. Perhaps he had made a separate copy of it, in order to polish and revise it afresh.

² These fragments of sketches (of bks. ii., iv., vi. and vii.) are published in vol. ii. of the "Opere" (P.M.) with the title: "Frammenti autografi delle Istorie Fiorentine." Signor Passerini hoped at first that he had discovered a part of the finished original of the work; but on being advised of his mistake, he published first the "Histories" and then the rough sketches, without collating them. The latter, therefore, are almost useless, whereas they would have served, with a few variations of the text given in the shape of notes, to exhibit Machiavelli's method of correcting and improving his style.

self-control enabling him to express with limpid truthfulness his most elevated and ardent ideas. And it is in his loftier flights of enthusiasm that he makes use of the most familiar language. Dante Alighieri is likewise most clear and spontaneous in the sublimer *Canti* of the "*Divina Commedia*," and accordingly is the greatest of our poets, just as Machiavelli is undoubtedly the best of our prose writers.

This fiery vigour results from the qualities inherent to Machiavelli's mind : from his unfaltering ardour for his country and its freedom. For this is the animating spirit of his "*Histories*," no less than of his political writings. The patriot and philosopher is never lost in the historian. As we have seen, this is the source of the merits and defects of the work, and will be still more clearly evidenced on comparing it with Guicciardini's "*History of Italy*." The latter has no theories to demonstrate, is never transported by enthusiasm, is always calm, cool, and impassible. Occasionally, it is true, he yields to an impulse of rather exaggerated self-praise, rather extravagant depreciation of his political opponents ; but an irresistible instinct to paint things as they really are, with their causes and immediate results, soon regains the victory, for this is the distinguishing speciality of his intellect. In his autobiographical "*Ricordi*," Guicciardini exhibits his own weaknesses, the defects and vices of his ancestors, with a frankness that resembles cynicism, but is merely a positive passion for describing men in their naked reality.

And if Guicciardini does not always succeed in discovering the rational connection of the huge multitude of facts which he arrays before us, he never tries to establish an artificial connection between them. He still adheres too much to the annal form, that Machiavelli had already discarded, and thus is continually obliged to interrupt his narrative in order to resume it the following year. This often renders his work very involved and laborious. The history of Italy is far more complex than that of Florence, and so thronged with events that even at the present day we cannot succeed in arranging it in logical sequence and rational unity. But the space of time embraced by Guicciardini is much more limited than that treated in Machiavelli's work. The former writer chiefly devoted himself to contemporary events, in many of which he played a prominent part : his knowledge of these and of the individuals concerned in their accomplishment is always wide and profound. There was no scope for hypotheses nor theories, nor

even for inquiry into the great laws of history or remote causes of events : all that was needed was a searching and accurate study of reality. And in this Guicciardini is still unrivalled.¹ His researches were numerous, his experience vast ; no one could surpass him in the comprehension and delineation of the nature of statesmen, and of the most tangled diplomatic intrigues of his time. Born and educated in Florence, then the chief centre of political activity, acumen and culture, he was sent, in his youth, to the court of Ferdinand the Catholic, where he gained acquaintance with the affairs of Europe. After his return to Italy, he filled high offices in the service of the popes. He had to govern extensive provinces in very difficult times ; he played a very important part in the great events then occurring in Italy, and always proved himself a genuine statesman. This experience and these qualities are alike conspicuous in his work.

Italians had long learnt how to write admirable municipal histories ; Guicciardini was the first to compose a really general history of equal merit. To his unrivalled Florentine penetration he added a practical knowledge of the general politics of Italy and the whole of Europe, and an independence and breadth of judgment that was never fettered by local prejudices, never indulged in rash speculations. All this is to be seen in his history and his discourses. While the works of Machiavelli often start from a general conception and are devoted to its demonstration, those of Guicciardini, on the contrary, seek to display the intrinsic nature and connection of facts, to show their causes and nearest results ; and only to indicate what is necessary and possible to be done at the given moment, the passing hour.

The frequently repeated adage that the style is the man, is strongly proved in this case. Guicciardini's "*Storia Fiorentina*," as well as all the "*Inedited Works*," written in his first youth or amid the whirl of affairs, without any pretence of literary merit, are so graphic, have so spontaneous an elegance, that it might be easy to confuse his style with that of Machiavelli, but for the ardent enthusiasm always animating the latter and never affecting the immovable serenity of the former. But when Guicciardini set himself to write the "*History of Italy*," and wished to perform the task with added pomp and dignity, he

¹ The illustrious historian, Leopold Ranke, has expressed a different opinion. *Vide* our remarks upon Guicciardini at the end of Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition.

increased the force and often even the eloquence of his style ; but thereby lost his primitive simplicity and became artificial. His laboured phraseology, his too Ciceronian periods are painfully wearisome to the reader. Nor is there any ground for the assertion, that these defects were caused by want of leisure for the correction and revision of his work. On the contrary, it was by too much polish, too much straining after effect that he changed and ruined his style. We find the clearest proofs of this in his original manuscripts, which are corrected and re-copied over and over again.* His letters and reports, written on the spur of the moment, are, instead, thoroughly simple and elegant. When he sought to elevate his ideas, and clothe them in more ceremonious and grandiose dress, he could not avoid regarding them with the glance of an outsider and at once fell into the vice of artificiality. Machiavelli, on the other hand, found sublimity in all that he felt most profoundly ; in that which was nearest and most akin to his mind. It was then that he rose superior to himself and became increasingly simple and natural. The flame of patriotism burnt more quickly and purely in him than in Guicciardini, and he was the greater writer, because he was the better man of the two, all calumnies of his detractors notwithstanding.

* *Vide* the above-mentioned "Observations" on Guicciardini at the end of Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition.





CHAPTER XV.

Death of Adrian VI.—Election of Clement VII.—Battle of Pavia—Conspiracy of Morone.



WHILE Machiavelli was still engaged upon his uncompleted "Histories," events occurred bringing his literary labours to a sudden close. Serious and unforeseen political complications recalled him to public life for the remaining years of his existence—last years teeming with pain, since he was forced to witness the ruin of his country, and the failure of his own endeavours to mitigate its woes.

The death of Adrian VI. took place on the 14th of September, 1523. The ensuing election was of the highest importance, as the rival influences of France and Spain, already battling in the outer world for the dominion of Italy, were combating each other in the Conclave. It would be easy for the new Pope to weigh down the balance on either side. Therefore the struggle was carried on with the utmost heat; cardinals poured in from all quarters, among them Soderini, who was still a very powerful personage, although only just released from the prison into which Adrian had thrown him. On perceiving how rapidly Giulio dei Medici was gaining ground, backed by the Spanish influence, he at once joined that side, and thus secured his own victory. Accordingly, during the night of the 18–19th of November, Giulio was elected, and immediately assumed the name of Clement VII. Every one knew that he was of illegitimate birth, although he did his utmost to conceal it. It is said that fortune smiles on

bastards ; nevertheless it was as hostile to him, as it had been in every way favourable to Leo X. Even the worst-considered matters turned out well for that Pontiff, whereas the most carefully planned schemes of Clement VII. came to an evil ending. His reign was no less fatal to himself than to Florence, to Italy, and to the Church.

At the moment of assuming the tiara, Clement was reported to be a pious man, of virtuous life, extremely clearheaded, untiringly laborious, and with much knowledge of affairs and human passions. All believed him to have been the guide of Leo X., and to have a far greater capacity for rule. But Leo X., notwithstanding his love of pleasure and dislike of fatigue, had possessed a certain political instinct enabling him to adopt the gravest resolves without undue hesitation. He had only made use of Cardinal Giulio to obtain required information, undertake necessary inquiries, and execute his own decisions. For the latter was so convenient an instrument as to appear to lead the ruler that he served. "In this manner," remarks Guicciardini, "the affairs manipulated by these two very different natures, served to prove how opportune may be sometimes the mixture of two contraries."¹

When Clement VII. was called upon to direct the affairs of the Church singlehanded, it was soon discovered that he was absolutely devoid of the faculty constituting the practical genius of statesmen, which, by leading them to take an almost instinctive reckoning of the unforeseen, urges them to rapid resolve. Timid and irresolute, he shrank from all great responsibility, and this weakness of character, that now became fatal to him, was increased by the nature of his intellect, which, at the most critical moments, spent itself in lengthy meditation on the *pros* and *cons* of every possible decision. And as if that were not enough, he chose for his counsellors two men of opposed sentiments : the one an Italian, Giovan Battista Giberti ; the other a German, Niccolò Schomberg. The latter, who had been a monk in the days of Savonarola, and afterwards Archbishop of Capua, was keen, tenacious, impetuous, and an ardent partisan of Spanish policy ; he dominated the Pope, and was almost feared by him. Giberti, on the contrary, won his master's affection, was guided rather by impulse and passion than by reason, so that after being first a determined adversary of France, he afterwards became as warm a promoter of her interests. It is easy to understand the great peril involved in seeing the

¹ Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," vol. viii. bk. xvi. p. 79.



PAVIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.
 (After the "Cosmographie" of Belleforest.)

Papal throne occupied by a man bewildered by so many uncertainties, such opposing influences, on the eve of a gigantic conflict, the issue of which might at any moment hinge upon the policy of the Pope.¹

The Florentines were the first to experience the effects of Clement's vacillating character. Notwithstanding his old acquaintance with them, he began to question every one as to how and by whom they ought to be governed. The majority gave him the reply that he desired, namely, that he should send to Florence Silvio Passerini, Cardinal of Cortona, in company with the two young bastards Ippolito and Alessandro dei Medici, and authorize him to rule the city in their name. But Passerini, being a man of extremely harsh manners, was totally unfitted for the post. Ippolito dei Medici, supposed to be the child of Giuliano and a woman of Pesaro, was barely sixteen years of age. Alessandro, who was still younger, was the son of Lorenzo and a black or mulatto slave, and had his mother's dark skin, thick lips, and frizzy hair. These two boys were the last descendants of the elder Medici branch. Giovanni, already well known and soon to be famous as the captain of the Black Bands, belonged to a collateral branch of the family, and was never in favour with the Pope.

Certain citizens of considerable weight, such as Jacopo Salviati, Francesco Vettori and Roberto Acciaiuoli, openly disapproved the idea of Florence being governed by the Cardinal of Cortona, and plainly told the Pope that, as to Ippolito and Alessandro, it would be far better just now to send them to school to see if they could be trained as statesmen. Why not, they added, allow the Florentines to govern themselves under his protection; why not throw open the Council hall as he had so often talked of doing? But Clement VII. preferred the advice of those who seconded his own wishes, and saying that he deemed it best to adopt the views of the majority, despatched the boys and the Cardinal to Florence. As a natural consequence, the latter speedily excited general hatred, and this hatred was afterwards directed against all the

¹ Guicciardini, "*Storia d'Italia*," *loc. cit.*, pp. 79-85; Ranke, "*History of the Popes*" (translated from the German), London, Bohn, vol. i. pp. 80, 81. At this point Ranke is in agreement with Guicciardini, who gives an admirable description of the character of Clement VII.; Gregorovius, "*Geschichte*," &c., vol. viii. p. 413 and fol.; Capponi, "*Storia*," vol. ii. p. 344; Vettori, "*Sommario della Storia d'Italia*," p. 381.

Medici, and went on increasing until at last it developed into open rebellion.¹

Elsewhere, events of still graver importance were now in course of preparation. The grand struggle between Spaniards and French was on the point of decision by the sword. The latter withdrew from Lombardy, and the former advanced full of revived daring. They had valiant captains; for Charles V. did not choose his leaders, as the French often chose them, at the instance of feminine wiles or court intrigues. Among these leaders were Antonio de Leyva and the Marquis of Pescara, both of Neapolitan birth but Spanish origin, and men of the highest courage. There was the celebrated Constable de Bourbon, whose desertion of France and his sovereign had made so much noise; and there was the Viceroy of Naples, Viscount de Lannoy, who was of Flemish birth. King Francis I., determined to put an end to all uncertainty, crossed the Alps with an army of fifty thousand men. On the 26th of October, 1524, he made his entry into Milan; then went to Pavia, where Antonio de Leyva was shut up with four thousand foot, and where the great quarrel was now to be decided. The Spaniards did all in their power to gain the Pope to their side; but as usual he hesitated. He could not desire the victory of either the French or the Spaniards, since in any case he would be at the mercy of the conqueror, who would naturally become the arbiter of Italy's fate. In fact, the interests of the States of the Church were now inevitably identified with the Italian national independence, and this gave great weight to the policy of the Pope. But neither Leo X. nor Clement VII. ever dared to soar to the lofty plane towards which it seemed that events must perforce impel them. Although the best politicians of Italy, and Machiavelli in particular, made a thousand efforts to stimulate and spur them on, yet they never rose above trickery and subterfuge.

Francis I. was strongly entrenched in his camp, while fresh German forces were pouring in to swell the enemy's ranks. He was still at the head of a numerous army, although he had despatched the Duke of Albany, with three thousand foot and two thousand horse, to the south of Italy; his Grisons troops had gone to defend the castle of Chiavenna, and his reinforcements from France had been scattered on the road. He had the main body of the enemy in front, and Antonio de Leyva in his rear. And

¹ Vettori, "Sommario," pp. 349, 350.

the latter had already made some fortunate sallies, in one of which the valiant Giovanni dei Medici had been gravely wounded, and thus put *hors de combat* for some time. Provisions were beginning to fail in Pavia, money to run short in the imperial camp. Everything, therefore, might have shown the king the expediency of waiting, and avoiding a pitched engagement. But Pescara, being pressed for time, daily provoked him by well-contrived skirmishes, so that at last he deemed it cowardly to longer refuse battle. On the morning of the 24th of February, 1525, Pescara forced his way into the French camp, by a breach made during the night in the wall of the park surrounding the encampment; De Leyva made a sortie from Pavia; the French, who were already prepared, moved forward in order of battle. At first victory seemed to smile upon them; but then Pescara, at the head of the Spanish harquebusiers, succeeded in routing their men-at-arms. Frundsberg gave equal proofs of valour with his landsknechts, and De Leyva joined the others in the general attack. The Swiss at Marignano had already begun to lose their prestige of invincibility, and now at Pavia they fell into confusion, and before long victory declared for the imperial forces. France lost her best captains on this field; her valiant army was defeated, and ten thousand corpses lay scattered on the road between Pavia and the Certosa.¹ But the crowning blow was the capture of Francis I. on the battle-field. It was on this occasion that he wrote to his mother, the Queen Regent, the celebrated words: "I have lost all, save my honour and my life which has been spared."² Pescara de Leyva and Frundsberg were the heroes of this battle, a more decisive one than any fought for centuries,³ inasmuch as it rendered Charles V. the most powerful

¹ Prof. de Leva speaks of 8,000, Mignet of 10,000, Gregorovius of 12,000 slain. Guicciardini states it to have been generally believed that more than 8,000 French perished by the sword, or by drowning in the Ticino.

² "Madame, pour vous faire savoir comment se porte le reste de mon infortune, de toutes choses ne m'est demeuré que l'honneur et la vie, qui est sauve." These were the precise words penned by the king. "Papiers d'État du Cardinal Granvelle," vol. i. p. 250. Aimé Champollion-Figeac, "Captivité du roi François I.," p. 129. Vide also Mignet, "Rivalité," &c., vol. ii. p. 68; De Leva, "Storia di Carlo V.," vol. ii. p. 242. Tradition has somewhat altered the king's words, attributing these to him instead: "Tout est perdu, fors l'honneur!"

³ "Sie est das grossartigste Schlachtenbild des XVI. Jahrhunderts, von homerischer Erhabenheit. Eine weltgeschichtliche Katastrophe hat sich darin concentrirt," Gregorovius, "Geschichte der Stadt Rom," vol. viii. p. 34; De Leva, "Storia di Carlo V.," vol. ii. chap. iv.; Mignet, "Rivalité," &c., vol. ii. chap. vii. The French work makes too little account of Italian works on this subject, and especially as regards the very conscientious work of Prof. de Leva, which is based on original research.

sovereign in Europe and the arbiter of Italy, whose independence was now truly lost.

A short time after the battle of Pavia a very strange incident occurred that has been related and interpreted in various ways by different historians. Among other things it proves very clearly that the Italians had not only recognized the desperate strait they were in, but yearned for deliverance from it, and that the idea formulated by Machiavelli in the exhortation to his "Prince," was also, if in a vaguer and lesser degree, the idea of many of his compatriots. Nevertheless, they lacked the qualities required to translate it into action. They all distrusted one another, only seeking, only hoping for foreign assistance. There was no man really capable of taking the lead in the great enterprise; and of all men the least fitted was Pope Clement VII., whom fate, as if in irony, seemed to persistently thrust into the part of representative of the noblest national aspirations.

On the 1st of April, 1525, the imperialists, who although victorious, had exhausted their treasury, made an agreement, binding both the contending parties to defend Milan from every hostile attack. The States of the Church, Florence and the Medici remained under the protection of the Emperor, to whom the Florentines—and this was the essential point—were to pay the sum of 100,000 ducats. But the insolence of the conquerors, their continual plundering and imposition of fines, were in no way checked by this agreement, but on the contrary daily augmented. Hence the Italians were increasingly disgusted and irritated at being handed over from one master to another, and could not resign themselves to being henceforth utterly at the mercy of the imperialists, who, already dominant in Naples, were now victorious in Lombardy. But this discontent, however general, was entirely impotent. The only powers in a condition to offer any resistance were the Venetians and the Pope. But the former only thought of their trade and their colonies; the second could neither dare nor decide to do anything.

Meanwhile the government of France was in the hands of the Queen Regent, Louise of Savoy, whose behests were received with unanimous compliance by a nation burning to resume the war in order to avenge their king and deliver him from captivity. This general thirst for revenge, this desire to retaliate beyond the Alps, gave hope to the Italians. And the Regent, being aware of this, seized the opportunity to inform the Duke of Milan, through

his brother, Maximilian Sforza, and the Venetians by other means, that she was ready to assist any general revolt against the imperial rule in Italy, to renounce on the part of France all pretension to the Neapolitan throne, and to leave Lombardy to the Duke. The same proposal was made to the Pope, who instantly welcomed it with greater ardour than the others. Now, he thought, he could see a possibility of the national war of independence that had so often been suggested and discussed. Many had declared and now again repeated to him that this war would be the salvation of his States and confer upon him the glorious title of Deliverer of Italy, which Giulio II. had, at one time, hoped to obtain, and that even Leo X. had frequently professed to covet.¹ The Datary, Giovan Matteo Giberti, was the man who chiefly encouraged and urged him in this direction. He was so inflamed by the idea of a national war, that he began to send despatches to the Papal nuncios and envoys extraordinary in order to excite the courage of all the Italian potentates, bidding them not to let slip an opportunity, that was the finest in the world, for obtaining freedom and acquiring eternal glory."² These were the words employed by him in a letter of the 1st of July, 1525, to Ennio Filonardi, Nuncio in Switzerland, and on the 10th of the same month he wrote to the Auditor Girolamo Ghinucci: "It is my belief that the world is growing young, and that the extreme misery of Italy will be transformed into the highest bliss."³ And he wrote to all in the same strain. The Genoese Domenico Sauli went to Milan, in the name of the Datary and also of the Pope, with a proposal for an Italian league with France for the liberation of Italy.⁴ Shortly after, the Pope sent definite proposals to France. They were as follows: Milan was to be left to the Duke, who could receive help from the Swiss; Naples and Sicily to be freely handed over to the Pope, and remain at his disposal. France was to supply 50,000 ducats per month until the end of the war, and meanwhile was immediately to pay two months in advance. She would also be bound to furnish 600 lances and 6,000 foot at her own expense, together with a proportionate amount of artillery, and ten or more

¹ Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," bk. xiv. vol. vii. pp. 4, 5.

² Letter of the 1st of July, 1525, to Ennio Filonardi, Nuncio in Switzerland. "Lettere ai Principi," vol. ii., at sheet 80r. Venezia, Ziletti, 1575.

³ Letter of the 10th of July, 1525, to Guido Guiducci, in the "Lettere ai Principi," vol. ii., at sheet 86.

⁴ *Vide* Morone's "Esame" in the "Ricordi inediti di Girolamo Morone," published by Count Tullio Dandolo, Milan, 1855, pp. 152-54.

galleys, as circumstances might demand. And for greater security, a princess of France was to be given in marriage to the Duke of Milan. Thus a perpetual alliance would be concluded between France and Italy, and the latter, on being rid of the imperialists, would immediately send 1,000 lances and 12,000 foot at her own expense, to release the king and aid France in every emergency. France, on her side, was to guarantee the same assistance to Italy. All would be in readiness for the commencement of the war on this side of the Alps, the moment France should have pledged herself, by sending the first instalment of money, and giving her army orders to march.¹ And while Giberti was using every effort to push on these negotiations with France, he was at the same time urging the Italian potentates to venture on the enterprise, even without any help from abroad. But France, while strenuously inciting Italy to revolt and war, gave her no help beyond words. And being engaged in negotiations for the release of the king, her policy was liable to change at any moment. As for the Italians, they not only distrusted France, but distrusted one another, without any exception; and therefore every one sought to keep open a way of escape in case the rest should draw back. Consequently all endeavoured to give more or less direct warning of the plot to Charles V. or his representatives, in order to be able on emergency to declare themselves his faithful friends. This did not, however, prevent them from continuing the negotiations they had begun, being resolved to profit by them if matters succeeded, as the phrase then went, *ad votum*. Such was the policy of the period. Charles V. and his followers behaved with equal falsity, as we shall speedily see. The Venetians approved, but said that their decision depended upon that of the Pope. The latter, who had been the first to encourage the secret bargain, now showed equal eagerness in warning the Emperor to keep good watch over his captains in Italy.² The Duke of Milan turned a favourable

¹ Letter of Giberti to Canossa, French envoy to Venice, dated the 8th of July. Giberti states that these proposals were despatched to France on the following day. "Lettere ai Principi," vol. ii., at sheet 85. In fact they are the identical proposals included in the "Recheste mandate ad fare in Franza" per N.S., among the "Documenti concernenti la vita di Girolamo Morone," published by Giuseppe Müller, in the "Miscellanea di Storia Italiana" of the Royal Turin Association of National History, vol. iii. pp. 436-37. Turin, 1865.

² Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," vol. viii. bk. xvi. p. 56. This writer tells us that the Pope was continually filled by suspicion and anxiety, and accordingly, "from no intent to betray the negotiations, but merely to prepare a refuge in case the thing failed, paid the Kaiser the kind service of advising him to keep his captains

ear to the French suggestions; but he, too, by means of the secretary, Morone, immediately gave notice of them to the Viceroy, who advised him to continue the negotiations, to see to what they might lead.¹ Meanwhile, Morone, on his side, was finessing to obtain from the Emperor the investiture of the duchy for Sforza.

At last arrived Domenico Sauli, the Genoese, bearing from Rome the definite proposal for an Italian league against the imperialists. The moment appeared to be singularly propitious. Francis I. had asked to be taken to Spain for an interview with Charles V., and the Viceroy had conducted him there without the knowledge of Bourbon and Pescara, who were hotly opposed to the measure, since from motives of personal interest they preferred to keep him in Italy. Pescara was specially furious against the Viceroy, and accused him in his wrath of having shown cowardice at Pavia, by his frequent cries of: "We are lost!" He added that he was ready to prove the truth of this assertion at the sword's point.² He seemed even to be irritated against the Emperor, believing him to have sanctioned the Viceroy's proceedings. For these reasons Sauli found a willing hearer, when he spoke to Morone of the proposed league, and in the name of the Pope and the Datary, suggested the idea of offering the kingdom of Naples to the angry and discontented Pescara, on condition of his frankly adhering to the league and assuming its military direction.³ Sforza's secretary seemed enchanted by the proposal, and from that moment became the chief manipulator of the plot, and the leading agitator of Italian politics, without, however, ceasing to urge the Emperor to grant the investiture of the dukedom to his own lord. He, too, and even more than the rest, was anxious to keep open a way of retreat, that might at any moment become a necessity. He contrived to do all this in a way of his own and one befitting his strange character, singular intellect and audacity, and the faithlessness that was no less conspicuous in him than in all other politicians of the age. The result was a dark and shadowy drama long shrouded in mystery, and that even at this day, after

in a good humour." These warnings were conveyed in a "*Memoriale mandato d'ordine del Papa Clemente VII., a Monsignor Farnese.*" *Vide* "*Papiers d'État du Cardinal Granvelle*," vol. i. p. 295; De Leva, "*Storia di Carlo V.*," vol. ii. p. 287.

¹ Morone also declares this in his "*Esame.*" Dandolo, "*Ricordi*," &c., p. 152.

² Guicciardini, "*Storia d'Italia*," vol. viii. bk. xvi. p. 52.

³ Morone's "*Esame.*" Dandolo, "*Ricordi*," &c., pp. 152-159.

prolonged research and the discovery of many new documents, has not been entirely made clear.

Morone was Machiavelli's junior by one year only ; he had studied Latin and Greek literature and jurisprudence. Then, entering on a political and administrative career, he served many different masters in the capacity of secretary, chancellor, &c. He made rapid way upon this road, since besides possessing intellect, he was not only of an audacious and enterprising character, but of enormous cleverness in penetrating the windings of diplomacy, and thus speedily gained the name of having one of the best heads in Italy. In 1499, when Lodovico Sforza took to flight, Morone was his secretary, and arranged the terms of the surrender ; and although these were not accepted by the French invaders of Lombardy, he was soon after taken into their service. Later, he promoted the choice of Lodovico's son Massimiliano as Duke of Milan, and served him faithfully, zealously, and courageously until the young Sforza, worn out by his numerous trials, resigned himself to perpetual banishment in France. After undergoing many other vicissitudes Morone worked hard, when the imperial fortunes were again in the ascendant in Italy, to procure the nomination of Sforza, Lodovico's second son, to the dukedom of Milan. He became secretary to the new prince, and negotiated in his name for the investiture of the duchy, first offered by the Emperor on inadmissible conditions which were afterwards modified and accepted. At the same time he took a most active part in the conspiracy by negotiating with the Pope concerning the Italian league with France against the Empire. He undertook the task of winning over Pescara, and had already plunged into the work with so much zeal, showing himself so convinced of success and pursuing it so hotly, that he was long considered the original author of a design that, on the contrary, had been first conceived in Rome.

At this time Pescara was reputed to be the foremost general in Europe. A very ambitious and wholly unscrupulous man, he was now irritated by the departure of Francis I., and also by the idea that he was insufficiently appreciated by the Emperor. Although of Spanish origin, and an enemy of the Italian name, he was yet a native of Italy, and could not be supposed to be utterly callous regarding the fate of his own country. At all events, the promise of a great kingdom seemed a sufficient bait to lure him to the cause. Morone had immense confidence in his own intellect and

eloquence, and accordingly never doubted of being able to seduce the ambitious soldier by the prospect of a royal crown; the exacerbated spirit by the offer of means of revenging himself, liberating his country, establishing his fortunes, and acquiring immortal renown. He therefore sought an interview with Pescara, and after demanding and obtaining his pledged word as an honourable soldier to preserve secrecy in any case, he revealed the design of his partners in the league, and laid the great proposal before him, inviting him to be the leader of the enterprise. He reminded him of the universal suffering and oppression of Italy, and her need of a deliverer; gave a vivid picture of the glory of liberating the country, the happiness of possessing a kingdom, the holiness of a war desired by the people, assisted by France, and blessed by the Pope. He referred to the examples of ancient¹ and modern history. Although with less eloquence he must then have expounded the identical ideas expressed at the conclusion of the "Prince."

But his listener was a soldier equally insensible to eloquence and historic memories, and with no eye but for the present and present realities. Pescara was aware of the strength of the imperial arms, the weakness of those of the Italians always at discord among themselves, always suspicious of one another; and he also knew how little reliance could be placed in the promised assistance of France, who for the sake of releasing her king might at any moment be brought to submit to any conditions. Besides, he was suffering from a malady that must shortly carry him to the tomb. Consequently he had no

¹ This is how Pescara described the interview in one of his letters to the Emperor: "Y dende algunos dias vyno Hieronimo Moron a hablarme per grandes arodeos y ultimamente dezirme que sy yo le prometia la fe de le tener secreto, que el me dyria y descubriria grandes cosas. Yo le dixi que le ternia secreto, y le dj la fe. Descubriome el mal contentamyento de toda Italia, y como toda ella disponya y determynava salyr de sugcyon, y de Francia abyta grande correspondencia y requyrymyentos, y que sy yo querya sentirme de como me avyan tratado, y de la forma con que procuravan y abyta syempre procurado abaxarme, y acordarme que abia nacydo Italiano, y que gloria podia ganar en ser el libertador de la propria patria, que en my mano era ser la cabeça y el capytan de toda esta empresa, y que el creya, que todos concurrerian en darme el reyno de Napoles, y que abia tan grandes cosas y tan grandes cymyentos, que yo veria que era razon de venyr cuello y que podria byen salyr lo que se desia." Letter of the 30th of July, 1526, duplicate of one of the 25th, in the "Documenti che concernono la vita pubblica di Girolamo Morone," collected and edited by Giuseppe Müller, p. 358 and fol. This is the third vol. of the "Miscellanea" by the Turin Royal Association of National History. Vol. ii. contains the "Lettere ed Orazioni Latine di Girolamo Morone," edited by Domenico Promis and Giuseppe Müller.

inclination to accept bills at a long date. But neither was he a man to decidedly reject the highly flattering promises made to him by Morone in the name of the Pope and of other powers. For, in conclusion, either the enterprise might succeed, in which case he would certainly have been ready to accept the offer, or there might be no possibility of making it succeed, and even in this case it suited him to feign consent to and complicity in the plot, in order to turn to account his knowledge of it by disclosing it to the Emperor. Meanwhile, too, he might be able to extract money from the allies ; and this was pressingly needed for his army, which was destitute of everything. Accordingly, after binding himself to secrecy and learning the proposed plans, he neither accepted nor refused the leadership of the enterprise, but hastened to point out the grave difficulties in the way, declaring that first of all he must be certain of not having to violate the rules of honour by which he was bound as a soldier and vassal of the Emperor. He would have the case examined by competent persons ; advised Sforza and the Pope to do the same, although of course in general terms, without naming any one, in order that no hint of the precious secret might leak out. The replies of the Pope and Sforza were not long in coming, although the inquiry bore too much the appearance of an empty pretext. The generals of that period never held themselves bound by national ties, and least of all could the Neapolitan Pescara have any duties towards Spain and the Empire. He was only bound by those duties as a vassal to which he had in fact alluded. But he was instantly asked to remember that Naples was a fief of the Church, and that, if disposed, he might at once renounce his possessions in Spain for the sake of obtaining a kingdom. Positively, according to the ideas of the period, there was nothing extraordinarily unusual in the proposal now made to him. Had not Bourbon deserted France to enter the imperial service ? Had not the Prince of Orange done the same, and had not Pietro Navarro gone over to the French camp from pique against Spain ? Although posterity stigmatized these men as traitors to their respective countries, yet they were still numbered at that day among the most esteemed and respected captains, and as merely deserving a certain modicum of blame for having forsaken their natural rulers.¹ Assuredly, Pescara was not

¹ On this subject it is useful to refer to the essay of Mons. Ch. Paillard in the "*Revue Historique*," iii. année, tome viii. (7th. of December, 1878) pp. 297-367.

² Documents relatifs aux projets d'évasion de Francois I., prisonnier à Madrid, ainsi

one to pretend to nicer scruples than other men, and had he really desired to change his flag, might easily have found reasons or pretexts for discontent, especially when instigated thereto by the Pope.

The negotiations were actively pushed on; but France did not stir, and gave only verbal assistance.¹ Pescara continually demanded more money, which it was necessary to give him; and meanwhile it became known, to the surprise of all, that more landsknechts were pouring down from the Alps. Then it was repeated on all sides that the Emperor was already aware of the conspiracy. In fact, Pescara had kept him informed of everything by frequent despatches, pressing him to come to terms with France without delay, because all the world in Italy was against him, all yearning to drive away his army, and that there was a universal

qu' à la situation intérieure de la France en 1525, en 1542, et en 1544." At page 316, the author remarks that notwithstanding the very grave injuries suffered by the Constable de Bourbon at the hands of Francis I. and the Queen Regent, they did not serve to excuse an act of treason endangering the safety, not only of the royal authority, but of the nation itself. "Toutefois on se tromperait singulièrement, si l'on pensait que Bourbon ait été jugé par les contemporains comme il l'a été par la postérité; si l'on supposait que lui même ait senti sur sa tête ce poids inéluctable de honte, de mépris, de reprobation et de haine, dont aujourd'hui tout traître a pleinement conscience. . . . À cette époque, l'idée de patrie, aujourd'hui si puissante et pour ainsi dire souveraine, existait à peine, ou du moins était fort obscurie par l'idée féodale, encore dominante. . . . Sismondi a sur ce point un mot tout à fait topique: Les lettres des plus grands seigneurs de cette époque, où il est question du connétable, ne laissent pas, dit-il, entrevoir de blâme." In Italy, where feudal traditions had far less power, and especially in Florence, where the Republic had greatly forwarded the development of the national idea, historians were more severe in their judgment of Bourbon; yet even they generally speak of his treason to his sovereign, not to his country. Vettori, after relating Bourbon's death under the walls of Rome, adds: "A man undeserving of so honourable a death, after the treason done to his master" ("Sommario della Storia d'Italia," p. 379). Guicciardini (vol. viii. bk. xvi. p. 72) says that although in Spain the Bourbon was received with great honour and as a brother-in-law by Charles V., yet that the nobles of the court "abhorred him as an infamous person, styling him a traitor to his own king."

¹ On the 5th of October, G. Batta Sanga wrote to the French ambassador in Venice: "*Parturient montes, nascitur ridiculus mus*. I think that I may well begin in this manner, since this resolution announced by the French so many days ago, as though it were the advent of the Messiah, of sending help to Italy, has proved to be much less than that which they sent to offer by means of Lorenzo Toscano. Surely they cannot deem all Italians such fools as, in the simple hope of their good faith, to give themselves tied and bound into their hands, in order to improve their position with Cæsar, which, it may be suspected, is probably their real object, this offer being as generally known at Court, as though it were only intended to inspire Cæsar with alarm" ("Lettere ai Principi," vol. ii. p. 94¹).

hatred for the German and Spanish name.¹ Giberti's letters clearly show us, how it was known in Rome that the conspiracy was no longer a secret for any one, and it was surmised that Morone had played the traitor as well as Pescara.² As soon as the Duke fell seriously ill, Morone declared to Pescara that he would rather yield the duchy to the Emperor than procure the restoration of Massimiliano Sforza, who had proved himself so incapable of its government. Nor did he confine himself to words; for, although the Venetians and the Pope, with whom he was then plotting, had proclaimed themselves entirely hostile to the idea, he had prepared everything for the execution of his plan in the event of the Duke's demise.³ No one, however, had ever calculated upon the good faith of Morone and Pescara, but rather upon their selfishness and ambition. It was thought that if the conspiracy had really any chance of success, both had too much to gain to be likely to abandon it; but it was always expected that they would betray it and apply to the Emperor the moment that probability should fail. Accordingly, their main cause for anxiety and discouragement consisted in the arrival of the landsknechts, the non-arrival of any succour from France, and the absence of all present hope of obtaining it.

There was also mutual suspicion between Pescara and Morone. The latter knew himself to be greatly detested by the Spaniards, above all by De Leyva, who had threatened to murder him if he could get him into his hands. He knew Pescara well, and had said to Guicciardini: "that there was no one in Italy of greater malignity or less good faith than he."⁴ From all sides warnings came to him to stand on his guard or he would come to

¹ See the correspondence of Pescara with Charles V. in vol. iii. of the before-quoted "*Miscellanea di Storia Italiana*."

² The Datary, Giberti, wrote to Sauli in a letter of the 19th of September, 1525, how from many quarters the Pope had been warned that Morone and Pescara were betraying him, and that many persons alluded to the negotiations carried on by the allies, and related their minutest details, so that it was plain that all was now public. This naturally gave rise to the gravest suspicions. Nevertheless Giberti still trusted or feigned to trust in Pescara, and still more in Morone, being unwilling to credit that they could be ignorant of the immense advantages to be reaped from the success of the conspiracy. "*Lettere ai Principi*," vol. ii. at sheets 91 and 92.

³ He declares this himself in his "*Esame*," pp. 175-177, and Pescara also states it most emphatically in his letters to Charles V. *Vide* letter 8th of September, 1525, to be again quoted later on.

⁴ Guicciardini, "*Storia d'Italia*," vol. viii. bk. xvi. p. 67.

a sad end in Pescara's hands. He himself spoke of these rumours to the marquis, but wound up by declaring: "I trust in your Excellency, as I trust in God."¹ And the imperial captain, in his letters to Charles V. revealing the conspiracy and the promises and speeches made to him by Morone, said that he still felt sure of leading him as he chose.² In truth they were both playing a double game, and were both aware of it. Pescara had allowed it to be understood that he would not hesitate to take the thing in hand could he feel assured of the crown that was promised to him; but that he had never been able to deceive himself so far as to believe in the possibility of obtaining it. Morone, on the contrary, had been far more credulous; although less so than was supposed. He was not blind to the difficulties obstructing the enterprise, and knew that he risked his head if he should unduly compromise Pescara. Yet his knowledge of the latter's secret desires helped to reassure him, and, on the other hand, he had clearly given Pescara to understand, that, should the enterprise really prove to be hopeless, he too would be ready to throw himself heart and soul into the Emperor's cause. For these reasons, when invited to the Castle of Novara for a conference with Pescara, who was then ill, he accepted and went there, in the company of De Leyva, although warned by every one that he was rushing on his destruction.³

On the 13th of October he had a first interview with Pescara, a second on the 15th, and was then taken prisoner⁴ on his way out, and conveyed to the Castle of Pavia. On the 24th Pescara

¹ "Miscellanea" already quoted, vol. iii. p. 407; letter of the 5th of September, 1525; De Leva, "Storia di Carlo V.," vol. ii. p. 295.

² Pescara wrote to the Emperor, in his letter of the 8th of September, 1525: "Tengo por fe, que si el duque muere, que Geronimo Moron harà ultimo de potencia en servicio de V. M., pero en esto trova ruyn todo el posible: es verdad que muestra enteramente fiar de mj, y siempre lo traygo a lo que quiero" ("Miscellanea," &c., vol. iii. pp. 422, 423).

³ Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," vol. viii. bk. xvi. pp. 66, 67; De Leva, "Storia di Carlo V.," vol. ii. pp. 295, 296.

⁴ Guicciardini (*loc. cit.*, p. 67) and many other historians declare that during the conversation between Pescara and Morone, Antonio de Leyva was listening behind the arras where the marquis had concealed him. But De Leva ("Storia," vol. ii. p. 297) refuses, we think rightly, to credit this tale, because no mention of it is to be found either in the "Rapporto" of Rosso dell' Olmo, 17th of October, 1525 (in Marin Sanuto, vol. xi. p. 71), or in the "Cronica" of Grumello. For in fact there was no longer any secret to be discovered, all being as well known to De Leyva as to Pescara.

came to interrogate him, accompanied by De Leyva and the Abbot of Nazaria. There was little either to be asked or answered, for Pescara already knew all, and knew it from Morone's own lips. Nevertheless the latter wrote his confession with his own hand. After protesting in this against the unjust violence to which he had been subjected, and against this violation of good faith, he told the imperial general that he could reveal nothing more than what he had frequently said and repeated. He then traced the whole history of the conspiracy, recalling the offer of the Neapolitan kingdom, and the negotiations for conferring the investiture of Milan upon Sforza, who had declared his acceptance of it, while carrying on his arrangements for a national war against the Emperor.¹ This last declaration was the pretext of which Pescara availed himself to go straight to Milan and take possession of Lombardy.

And now from one moment to another every one was expecting to hear that Morone had already been put to death, when, to the universal amazement, Pescara published a decree of the 27th of October to the effect that he intended to hold the person of the prisoner in his own keeping, and ordaining that the latter's possessions should not be confiscated but left in the hands of his wife and children, who were to be treated with every respect.² Then, feeling that his end was near, for he died in fact on the 3rd of December, 1525, at the early age of thirty-six years, he made a will, in which he recommended not only the life but the liberty of Morone to the Emperor's mercy, imploring every possible benefit in his behalf, "since otherwise I should hold myself guilty."³ The Abbot of Nazaria and the Marquis del Vasto wrote in singular haste to Morone to inform him that Pescara had recommended

¹ Morone's "Esame."

² *Vide* the decree in Dandolo, "Ricordi," &c., pp. 201, 202.

³ "Item. I bequeath you Hieronimo Morone, who is now in prison, and I would pressingly supplicate your Imperial Majesty to grant him his life and every other benefit possible, and I would that nought of that which I have discovered to the advantage of your Majesty should be held as a condemnation of the above mentioned prisoner, even allowing that he may have failed to do that which he should have done. Your Majesty will graciously grant my request, since otherwise I should hold myself guilty ('perchè altrimenti me reputerei essere caricato')." (Dandolo, "Ricordi," p. 202). It is impossible to ascertain with any certainty what was "quelle opera che doveva fare;" it may possibly be an allusion to some promise made to Pescara by Morone during the progress of the conspiracy, or while he was in prison. It is certain that he promised a large sum of money as a ransom, and was then unable to pay it all at once.

him to Charles V. and added that he might rely upon their good offices in his favour. And even De Leyva, who had never had any liking for him, wrote to him from Milan on the 25th of March, 1526, in the following terms :

"It shall be contrived that your Excellency may rest satisfied. So, once more I pray you to be of good cheer, for I will do for you all that I would were done for myself, and I recommend myself to you."¹ Nevertheless, Morone was detained in prison at the pleasure of the Constable de Bourbon, who had assumed the command of the imperial army, and kept him as a hostage, in order to obtain money, of which he was now in the utmost need. After extracting many thousand ducats from Morone in this way, as well as a bond for the sum of twenty thousand more, on the 1st of January, 1527, he signed a decree in which, although charging him with conspiracy, and accusing him of unjust extortion of coin for his private advantage, he extolled his talent, courage, and experience and the services formerly rendered by him to the Emperor. He concluded by stating that in consideration of these merits, of the money recently supplied by him at a moment of extreme need, and of his declared purpose of again rendering useful service to the Emperor, he released Morone and granted him full pardon for all his crimes.² And, in addition to this, he shortly after nominated him commissary general to the imperial forces. In fact, we find Morone doing the duties of this office under the walls of Rome, at the time of Bourbon's death. Then came the sack of the Eternal City, and while Clement VII. was shut up in the Castle of St. Angelo, Morone played a very prominent part in the negotiations carried on for the Pope's release. By the aid of his talent, energy, and experience he rose higher and higher ; became as it were the guiding spirit of the evils wreaked upon Italy by the imperialists, and was in

¹ *Vide* the letter in Dandolo, "Ricordi," &c., p. 204.

² "Privilegium, gratia et restitutio clarissimi com." H. Moroni, in Dandolo's "Ricordi," &c., p. 209 and fol. : "Ut negari non possit eum ipsum non mediocrem partem habuisse in victoriis quibus S. C. M. Italiam potitus est. . . . Animadvertentes præterea eiusdem comitis H. Moroni præcipuas animi dotes, ingenti acumen, longum rerum arduarum et grandium usum, animi fortitudinem et inviolabilem erga eos principes fidem, quibus aliquando servitutem suam obtulit et dicavit. . . . Accessit præterea ut in præsentibus rei pecuniariæ necessitatibus, et in tanto sustinendorum exercituum oneri, cum nihil sit magis necessarium pecuniæ, eæque consumptus sint ingentes et fere intollerabiles, is ipse comes Hieronimus de notabili pecuniarum quantitate nobis subvenit et subventurus est," &c.

the camp of the army besieging Florence, on the last day of his life, the 15th of December, 1530.¹

The result of all this was to involve men's minds in numberless doubts, numberless uncertainties as to Morone's character, and the true meaning of the conspiracy. And these doubts and uncertainties swelled to exaggerated proportions when attempts were made to discover a great patriot in a man whose sole and unceasing aim was to make his way in the world, and who had always changed sides to suit the personal interests prompting his every act. Regarded as a patriot, his conduct remains as absolutely inexplicable as that of Pescara, De Leyva, and De Bourbon. How was it that Morone, in the face of general warning, and with certain knowledge that Pescara was now in perfect agreement with the Emperor, ventured to place himself in the former's power? And how was it that Pescara spared and recommended him? To attribute conscientious scruples to the marquis would be a sheer absurdity. He had never been possessed of any, and there was no reason for his conceiving any then, after never having had them before. It would be still more impossible to imagine that scruples of any kind could have inspired the conduct of De Leyva, Bourbon, or Charles V. himself, for they had held out no promises, and were not called upon to show any tenderness towards a conspirator. Morone was never credited with patriotism by the contemporaries who knew him, nor even by those who urged him to join the conspiracy. Guicciardini, in his "History of Italy," professes himself unable to comprehend the blindness prompting Morone to deliver himself into the hands of Pescara, whose cruelty and falsehood were so well known to him. But the same historian, on hearing of his imprisonment, wrote to Rome in one of his "Legazioni": "I fear that by means of his weathercock policy (*girandole*), he will soon contrive to counsel and direct the imperialists to the hurt of the allies;"² and so indeed it fell out.

But although his contemporaries could only judge Morone by their personal knowledge of him, the documents brought to

¹ Besides the various works from which we have quoted, we may refer the reader to a careful monograph on Morone, by Signor G. E. Saltini of the Florence Archives, published in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," series iii. vol. viii. part i. pp. 59-126, of the year 1868.

² Guicciardini, "Opere Inedite," vol. viii. p. 331, letter of the 23rd of October, 1525, dated from Faenza.

light in our own day enable us to see more clearly how matters really went. Morone, who had served many masters, and was quite ready to serve more, was studying how to gain additional power under the Duke of Milan, when the plan of the league and the offer of the Neapolitan kingdom to Pescara, were communicated to him from Rome. Both league and war harmonized with the real interests of Italy, with a need that, if not strongly felt, was still very generally understood by the Italians. Had Pescara really promoted the enterprise it might have achieved success, and by its success both he and Morone would have become very powerful personages. Therefore the proposal was made and accepted on the tacit and reciprocal understanding that should it prove impossible to attain the desired end, both would again devote themselves to the Emperor's cause. As we have seen, Morone had proved this by his deeds, when the Duke seemed to be at the point of death. Pescara, who had likewise gone very far, had also secured his own safety by revealing everything to Charles V. He had remained a member of the conspiracy, making his colleagues furnish supplies for the maintenance of the army, and had gone on in the increasing belief that, if manipulated by himself and the imperialists, Morone would prove an excellent instrument for the conquest of Italy, as soon as he, too, should realize the impracticability of the plot. Besides, as events afterwards showed, Morone was specially adapted to point out from whom most money could be extorted in Italy, and the imperialists were so constantly in need of funds as to frequently find themselves on the point of having to disband their troops. Morone, too, was very wealthy, and might furnish supplies from his own pocket, as he afterwards furnished them to De Bourbon.

Accordingly, when Pescara had him in his grasp, he subjected him to trial rather as a matter of form and to extort money, or in order to have a slight pretext for seizing Lombardy, than in the hope of obtaining any new disclosures. His unusual benignity, and his recommendation of him to the Emperor, were certainly dictated by his desire to win for the imperial cause the co-operation of one who had avowed himself ready to serve it, and might prove to be of the highest utility.

This conspiracy, therefore, teaches us that the idea of making Italy achieve her independence by means of her own resources, was present to many minds, and might have been accomplished

had any great and valiant leader arisen to carry it out by force of arms. For, although Italy was weak, her enemies were at war with one another, and so disorganized as to be often on the verge of ruin almost without being attacked. But the required leader was not forthcoming. At decisive moments every one sought to act on his own account, and all genuine combination of forces became an impossibility. This idea of national independence, although so often discussed since the days of Julius II., was then welcomed by the Italians rather from literary enthusiasm, and for the promotion of local or personal interests, than from any general and strongly felt need of a common country. Therefore it was impossible for it to lead to any great and durable result. Even Machiavelli himself had no clear perception of the idea, so long as he remained secretary to the Republic, and indeed showed himself ready to sacrifice everything to the interests of his own little city. But once out of office he was the only man to discern this idea, and to realize it intensely without hesitation or dubiety of purpose. He then expounded it with lofty eloquence, and sought to convert others to the same faith. Accordingly, from that time forward his energies were spent in passing from illusion to illusion, from hope to hope, doomed to behold the fading of the dreams by which he was unceasingly dominated. But we have no reason to believe that he ever cherished the most transient illusion as to the conduct of Morone, although the conspiracy might almost seem to have been inspired by the "Prince" and the "Discourses." No one of the participators in it had a shade of the energetic and honest patriotism that Machiavelli knew to be the most essential requisite for the achievement of the great idea.

NOTE.

Some remarks on F. Guicciardini's "History of Italy."

WE have frequently referred to Guicciardini, and while largely profiting by his "Storia d'Italia," have refrained from giving a minute analysis of the work, both on account of its length and because it was written long after Machiavelli was dead. But it is incumbent on us to examine the remarks of Prof. Leopold von Ranke concerning this "History," not only on account of their author's importance, but because they have some bearing on events related by ourselves on the authority of Guicciardini.

The eminent German historian published his remarks on Guicciardini in 1824, in an early work entitled : "Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber." At that time

Guicciardini's "*Opere Inedite*" had not yet been given to the world. But, while in Italy and elsewhere many writers considered these works to contain fresh proofs of the great value of their author's "*History of Italy*," Professor Ranke, on the contrary, held them to give added weight to his own views, and accordingly reiterated his criticisms in the second edition of his work (dated 1874), which was substantially identical with the first.

The two main charges he brings against Guicciardini are these: That in narrating events unshared or unseen by himself, he copies so extensively from other writers, without quoting them, as to frequently merit the title of plagiarist. That, as regards events shared or seen by himself, he frequently gives either careless and second-hand accounts, or purposely distorts events in order to assume a greater and more honourable part in them than he really had. Indeed on this head Professor Ranke finds added testimony in the "*Opere Inedite*," because, in his opinion, Guicciardini recounts certain events in the "*Letters*" and "*Legations*," in a very different way from that afterwards employed in his "*History*."

We will begin with a fact that specially concerns us, as one of those also narrated by ourselves. Speaking of the first riot of the year 1527 in Florence, Guicciardini relates in his "*History*" that he was the author of the agreement concluded between the citizens besieged in the Palace and the representatives of the Medici and the League. Federigo da Bozzolo had quitted the building, after being very badly received by the citizens, and was therefore resolved to advise the Cardinals Passerini, Cibo, and Ridolfi to adopt violent measures, feeling sure that it would be easy to force an entrance into the Palace. But Guicciardini dissuaded him from his purpose, begging him to reflect that it would lead to much bloodshed, whereat the Pope would be displeased. Accordingly, he accompanied Federigo back to the Palace, where they succeeded in arranging a written and signed convention. At first he was much praised for this, but was afterwards accused by both parties. The people said that Guicciardini, acting in the Medicean interests, had exaggerated the danger of the situation to the beleaguered citizens, and thus induced them to yield without necessity. On the other hand, Cardinal Passerini accused him of having taken more thought for the lives of the citizens shut in the Palace, and particularly for the safety of his brother, the Gonfalonier, than for the authority of the Medici, whose might have been permanently assured by force that day. ("*Storia d'Italia*," vol. ix. bk. xviii. pp. 42-44.) Here Professor Ranke remarks that all other contemporary historians say nothing on this head, assigning to Guicciardini the far less prominent part that he really played. The merit of deciding to avoid violence and bloodshed belongs to the Cardinals and Federigo da Bozzolo. Guicciardini was only summoned in his legal capacity to put the terms of the agreement in writing. His emphatic narrative is false, and was refuted in Jacopo Pitti's "*Apologia dei Cappucci*" ("*Archivio Storico Italiano*," vol. iv. part ii. anno 1843), and by the report made to the Datary by Guicciardini himself, a few hours after the event.

But, as regards Pitti, who was only eight years of age in 1527, he was a partizan of the Medici and the democratic faction, therefore hostile to Guicciardini, who was one of the *Ottimati*, and wrote at the time when the latter were out of favour with the Grand Duke Cosimo, who was then leaning on the democrats. The "*Apologia dei Cappucci*" was specially written in defence of the democrats against the *Ottimati* in general and Guicciardini in particular, and the latter being then in total disgrace, was a butt for accusations of every kind, some of which are too exaggerated and ridiculous to demand any refutation.

What did Guicciardini write to the Datary? In a letter dated the 26th of April,

1527 ("Opere Inedite," vol. v. p. 421), after describing the riot, he goes on to say that the government would have been overthrown, had the rioters taken to arms, instead of shutting themselves up in the Palace. He then adds that he and Federigo da Bozzolo went to the Palace to treat with the citizens, "and did so much, that on being assured of pardon, they (*the citizens*) were content to leave the Palace, which in fact could not be defended; but *it seemed to me* that to settle the matter in this gentle fashion was a benefit to the city and to the government, which can now feel safer than before with respect to the people, since the latter has proved of less account than was perhaps thought." This narrative therefore proves to the Datary that he, Guicciardini, preferred and was the author of a peaceable agreement; and only leaves unmentioned how he had first to bring round Federigo da Bozzolo, by telling him, for that end, that even the Pope would be ill-pleased by bloodshed. Now, when we remember that the Pope, on the contrary, was very displeased by the agreement, and, according to Nardi, would have taken a harsh revenge upon the revolted Florentines, but for being prevented by the sack of Rome ("Storia di Firenze," vol. ii. pp. 139-41), it will be seen that Guicciardini could have no reason to wish his share in arranging the agreement to be known in Rome, and that his silence on this point, in his letter, is very easy to understand.

Nor can it be said that other historians prove his account to be false, because, while recognizing the great part he had in arranging the agreement, they give no details of a conversation that was necessarily unknown to them, seeing that it took place between him and Federigo alone, and he could not then desire to make it public. Nardi says that the Cardinals dreaded a riot, and the besieged, seeing that resistance was impossible, gave ear to the terms proposed, and that the agreement was concluded, when Federigo da Bozzolo and then Guicciardini came to the Palace and promised that all should be forgotten. ("Storia," vol. ii. pp. 137-39.) Vettori says that Cardinal Ridolfi and Guicciardini, wishing to avoid violent means, sent Federigo da Bozzolo to the Palace. Failing to come to terms, Federigo went again with Guicciardini, and the agreement was then concluded. After which, he, Vettori, put the convention on paper, and it was signed by the Cardinals, the Duke of Urbino and Messer Federigo. This proves that the account given by Pitti and accepted by Ranke was false, since it states that the deed was written by Guicciardini in his legal capacity, because he was a lawyer. Nerli speaks very briefly of the incident; Varchi wrote much later and by order of the Medici, and Pitti followed. We cannot deny that Guicciardini, in his "*Storia d'Italia*," sometimes indulges in too much self-praise, and that even on this occasion, his tone showed little modesty. But it seems clear to us that his narrative of the April riot of 1527 is neither disproved by other historians, nor by his own letter, and that there is nothing improbable in it.

We now come to another incident, regarding which Professor Ranke repeats the same charges. In 1521, when Guicciardini was Governor of Reggio d'Emilia, the French attempted to seize that city. In his "*History*" he describes the affair in detail, and speaks highly of his own conduct. He writes that one day the General Lescut appeared before the walls with 400 men-at-arms, and asked to speak with the Governor, who immediately went to meet him at one of the gates. The General complained that French exiles were granted admission within the papal territories, and the Governor replied that it was worse when the French entered them sword in hand, without permission. Meanwhile some soldiers attempted to enter by another gate left open by chance, and the Reggians made resistance and fired upon them. And the disturbance spreading, they also fired at the General's

escort, wounding some of the number, and would have aimed at the General himself, had they not feared to hit the Governor who stood near him. The French took to flight, and the General was much alarmed, but Guicciardini gave him shelter in a safe place, reassured him, and then sent him away unharmed. This he did, because he had passed his word to Lescut, and had commands from the Pope to avoid giving offence to the King of France.

Here Ranke observes that soon afterwards Guicciardini gave a very different account of this event in a letter to Cardinal dei Medici (*"Opere Inedite,"* vol. vii. p. 281). In this letter he neither mentions the flight of the French, nor the dismay of their General, nor his own generosity in saving him. Why did Guicciardini, who was always ready to sing his own praises, keep silence as to what was most honourable to himself? Here, then, is another invention of the untrustworthy historian, afterwards refuted by his own words. But here, also, the *"History"* amply explains the silence preserved in the letter. Guicciardini's conduct in liberating General Lescut was much blamed, in the belief that had he kept him a prisoner, the Milanese State would have risen against the French. This hope, Guicciardini remarks, was very ill-founded, since the French who took flight were few in number, and at a short distance off found Federigo da Bozzolo and a thousand foot soldiers, so that they speedily halted and fell into order. (*"Storia d'Italia,"* vol. vii. bk. xiv. pp. 14-16.) All this clearly shows that he had designedly refrained, in writing to Cardinal dei Medici, from dwelling much on the ease with which he could have kept the General in custody. But excepting the latter's alarm on being forsaken by his men, and the circumstance of his being first sheltered and then liberated by Guicciardini, the rest of the account in the letter is identical with that given in the *"History"*: namely, of the resistance made by the citizens, the shots fired by them at the General's escort, which killed two men on the spot and fatally wounded a third. Accordingly the letter proves another omission of a detail given in the *"History."* This may lead to more or less justifiable suppositions, but does not imply that the letter proves the falsity of the narrative contained in the *"History,"* especially when we remember that the silence of the letter on one detail of the incident is easily explained by reference to the *"History."*

Professor Ranke also inquires into the authorities used by Guicciardini. This is an investigation of great importance, and the only basis for a genuine criticism of the *"Storia d'Italia."* But it should be a most thorough investigation, deciding, as far as possible, what these authorities were, judging what was their intrinsic and comparative value, and noting to what extent and in what way Guicciardini made use of them. But to arrive at any certainty on these points necessitates an examination of the author's original manuscripts. From this examination and careful comparison of the *"History"* with the *"Legations,"* and with the letters contained in the *"Opere Inedite,"* we gain clear proofs of Guicciardini's intrinsic merit, wide research, and great accuracy. Indeed, in these respects we believe that he must always be considered the foremost historian of his time. But although Professor Ranke has the merit of having initiated the study of Guicciardini's authorities, he began the task before the *"Opere Inedite"* were published, and when it was difficult and perhaps impossible to gain access to the original manuscripts. Therefore, his researches, while indicating the new path to be followed, could not be carried out with the desired thoroughness. He perceived that one of Guicciardini's sources was a history by Galeazzo Capra, surnamed Capella (*"Commentarii de rebus gestis pro restitutione Ducis Mediolanensis"*). This writer had been secretary to Morone and Francesco II., Sforza, had seen many

documents, had dealings with many men; was therefore likely to have had intimate acquaintance with the facts he narrated. This history, running from 1521 to 1530, went through eleven Latin editions between 1531 and 1542, and was quickly translated into Italian, German, and Spanish. Guicciardini undoubtedly made much use of it for the fourteenth and following books of his "History."

But to attribute too much importance to this fact, and believe, as Professor Ranke believes, that Guicciardini was a plagiarist, simply because he does not name the source he relies upon, seems to us grossly unjust, not merely because this exaggerates the extent to which Guicciardini makes use of Capella, but also because this leaves out of consideration the general custom, at that day, of never citing the authorities referred to. What, then, could be said of Machiavelli and all the other historians of the Cinquecento who were guilty of the same faults and to even a greater extent? Not one of them would escape with his fame intact. Professor Ranke gives high praise to Nardi. Yet no one has copied more than Nardi, who, in his "Storia di Firenze," appropriated the whole of Buonaccorsi's "Diario," only once giving him his due, and even then omitting to state that he had literally copied his words. It was not the custom in those days to recast what was considered to be good as it stood, and the histories of that period give no notes, whereas ours are loaded with them.

Considering, therefore, the prevalence of the custom, it is an excess of severity to harp upon certain secondary resemblances in order to prove Guicciardini guilty of plagiarism. In describing how, the night before the battle of Pavia, the imperial troops made a breach in the wall of the park where the French were encamped, Guicciardini says that it was opened by masons, and likewise with the aid of the soldiery, who threw down sixty "braccia" (i.e., thirty ells) of the wall. The same phrase is to be found in Capella: "Per fabros lapidarios, militum etiam auxilio, sexaginta muri passus tanto silentio prostravit." Professor Ranke cites this as a proof that Guicciardini not only copied, but copied without reflection, since battering rams, he observes, did more than masons in demolishing the wall, as Guicciardini must have certainly known. Therefore, if that writer copied even blunders regarding facts which must have been well known to him, what are we to think of facts of which he could have no personal knowledge?

It may be replied that Guicciardini would have been decidedly more exact had he said *sappers* and soldiers instead of masons and soldiers. But at a time when scrupulous modern exactitude was unknown, thousands of similar blunders may be detected in historians of the greatest weight when writing either of matters learnt from others or within their own knowledge. Their merit never consisted in minute exactness, but in their intelligent and truthful reproduction of essential facts and particulars.

At first Professor Ranke believed that, in treating of Florentine events, especially on the coming of Charles VIII. and the subsequent changes in the city, Guicciardini had relied on Bernardo Rucellai's "De bello Italico," and taken from that work even Piero Capponi's retort to Charles, only altering it somewhat and rendering it less probable. But in the second edition of his book, Ranke notes that the phrase, "You will sound your trumpets, and we will ring our bells," is also found in Guicciardini's "Storia Fiorentina," produced at an earlier date, i.e., in 1500. So this is an implicit acknowledgment that, at least, his remarks as to the source of the famous retort have lost most of their value. Nevertheless, he repeats that Guicciardini made no little use of Rucellai's work for his "Storia d'Italia," but the instances he gives merely prove, on the contrary, that the alleged

imitation was so slight as scarcely to merit that name. Certain expressions, certain judgments on the coming of Charles VIII., the policy of Lorenzo dei Medici, and similar points, are common to all the Florentine historians of the time, are indeed almost traditional, and it would be extremely hard to decide who was the first to utter them. The truth is that Guicciardini made use of many more authors than Professor Ranke supposed. This can now be proved with certainty, and with equal certainty that he likewise made use of an enormous number of original documents, studying them with patient and untiring accuracy, although this too was denied by the German critic.

The archives of the Guicciardini house not only contain several manuscripts of the "History" copied, corrected, and repeatedly revised, with many long passages cancelled and re-written, but also four volumes of "Historical Memoirs" ("Memorie Storiche"). These contain the materials for the "History," and clearly show us how it was composed. Like Machiavelli and many other of the best Florentine historians of the time, when engaged in chronicling contemporary events, Guicciardini chiefly based his narrative upon the letters of ambassadors and commissioners to the Signory and the Ten.¹ Numerous extracts from this correspondence are given in the "Historical Memoirs," and then afterwards re-copied and arranged according to their subjects and dates, and continually accompanied by marginal notes of accounts of the same events as given by other historians. There are frequent summaries derived from Capella, Mocenigo, Giovio, Bartolini Salimbeni,² Scipione Vegio,³ Girolamo Borgia,⁴ and many others. Elsewhere we find long fragments from chronicles, long extracts from Giovio, from Pandolfo Colenuccio, from a book by Alessandro Nasi, beginning with the battle of Fornovo, and from numerous other writers; there are copies of treaties, discourses, clauses of agreements, and even several original documents. Guicciardini evidently employed several secretaries for this long and patient labour, besides working

¹ There are extracts from the letters of M. A. Niccolini, orator at Milan (1492), of Piero Guicciardini, orator at Milan (1493), of the Commissioners at Pisa (1494), of G. B. Ridolfi, orator at Milan (1495), of Antonio di Pazzi, orator at Rome (1497), of Becchi, orator at Rome (1496), of Bracci, orator at Rome (1497). These are the first extracts at the beginning of vol. i., and they are carried on throughout the four volumes. Some are written in Guicciardini's hand; many others copied by a different pen.

² In the "Memorie Storiche" the name is simply indicated as follows: *Bartol.* Gherardo Bartolini Salimbeni was Guicciardini's brother-in-law, and addressed to him, in the shape of a letter, his "Cronichetta sopra le ultime azioni di Lorenzo dei Medici duca d'Urbino," afterwards published, in 1786, by Padre Ildefonso in an Appendix to vol. xxiii. of the "Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani."

³ Scipio Végius, author of the "Ephemerides," a manuscript work in the Ambrosian Library. His name is indicated in the "Memorie Storiche" as follows: *Scipio*.

⁴ This author, styled *El Borgia* in the "Memorie Storiche," must have been the Girolamo Borgia born at Sirisio, in the Basilicata, in 1475. At p. 235 and fol. of Signor Camillo Minieri Riccio's work, "Biografie degli Accademici Alfonsini, ditti poi Pontaniani" (1442-1543), published in the "Italia Reale," and afterwards in a separate edition of twenty copies, this Girolamo is stated to be a kinsman of Pope Alexander VI., and the intimate friend of Giovanni Borgia, Duke of Gandia. It is added that when the Duke was murdered, in 1497, by command of his brother Cesare, Girolamo Borgia was obliged to fly into hiding, "inasmuch as he knew all the secrets of the defunct." He was the author of many works in prose and verse, including a "Historia Aragonensium," "in twenty books, left in MS., and afterwards lost. Only the preface to bk. xix. was saved and preserved by Gio. Vincenzo Meola, as is attested in note xiii. p. 48, of the 'Letters of Onorato Fascitelli' (Naples, 1776)." We infer that this Girolamo Borgia must be the author quoted by Guicciardini, since no other of the same name is known to us, and also because all quotations and extracts from him in the "Memorie" refer mainly to events in Naples or connected with the Borgia.

a great deal at it himself. A careful examination of these precious manuscripts is an indispensable preliminary to any decided criticism on the "*Storia d'Italia*." Such examination is equally required for the explanation of certain historical facts which are not yet clearly understood, inasmuch as these "*Memorie*" comprise extracts from many ambassadorial reports no longer in existence.

Professor Ranke justly assigns a high value to the speeches given in Guicciardini's "*History*"; but even in these he imagines fresh proofs of the author's lack of veracity. There is one speech made by the Gonfalonier Soderini before the Greater Council, in which he alludes to the perilous state of the Republic and the probable return of the Medici. Nerli, who heard the speech, says that Guicciardini gave an *elegant* report of it in his "*History*." But Professor Ranke believes that Nerli used this expression, because he could not say that it was a *faithful* report. In fact, he observes, Nerli says of the discourse that in it Soderini rendered an account of his administration, and added that the personal attacks against him were made for the purpose of changing the government, and that accordingly he would only resign by the will of the people. Nardi and others say the same. Instead, according to the version of the speech reported in the "*History*," Soderini gave no account of his administration, but insisted strongly on the dangers threatened by the probable return of the Medici. Professor Ranke concludes by saying, that as Guicciardini wishes to lead the way to a mention of this return, he used the Gonfalonier's speech for that purpose, and thinking less of historic truth than literary elegance and style, gave an elegant rather than a true version of the discourse. But this explanation does not hit the mark. The truth is that Soderini made two speeches on this occasion. In the first, delivered after the conspiracy of Prinivalle della Stufa, and reported by Nardi ("*Storia*," vol. ii. p. 17), he gave an account of his administration. In the second, delivered later and transcribed by Guicciardini, he spoke of the threatened return of the Medici. Some chroniclers of the day give both discourses, and following their example, Capponi mentions each separately in his "*Storia della Repubblica Fiorentina*" (vol. ii. pp. 306 and 307); while other writers only report one of the two. Nerli records the second speech, but alludes in the same paragraph to a point given in the first. Guicciardini, being then engaged on the history of Italy and not of Florence, omits all mention of the first, but minutely records the second speech as having a more general importance, and includes nothing but what Soderini really said. Accordingly he is more faithful and exact than Nerli, and the latter's praise was therefore well merited. In book viii. of his "*History*" (vol. iv. p. 45), Guicciardini gives another speech, delivered by the Venetian Ambassador, Antonio Giustinian, in the year 1509, and says that it is faithfully rendered from the Latin original. Professor Ranke maintains that this discourse can be only a literary composition of a later date, because Giustinian's embassy never took place, and the letter of credentials from the Venetian republic, conceived in far more dignified terms than those attributed to Giustinian, was afterwards discovered in the possession of the latter's descendants. The truth is that the mission could not be accomplished, because the ambassador was not received; but the discourse was certainly written at the time, and then held to be authentic. A copy of it is to be found in the "*Machiavelli Papers*" ("*Carte del Machiavelli*"), and proves that Guicciardini's translation of it was thoroughly faithful. Ricci transcribed it in his "*Priorista*," and defended its authenticity against Venetian writers, who, from patriotic motives, cast doubts on that point. The Florentine Ambassador at Rome sent a copy of it to the Signory with a letter of the 7th of July, 1509. Machiavelli makes a sufficiently plain allusion to it in his "*Discorsi*" (bk. iii.

chap. iii.). It had been already printed in Naples, before being translated by Guicciardini.¹

Guicciardini's nephew furnished all the information in his power concerning his uncle's manuscripts, when he affirmed that Guicciardini gave much care to the examination of treaties. This Professor Ranke is unwilling to believe, and tries to justify his doubts by recalling what Guicciardini says of a treaty with which he should have been well acquainted, namely, that concluded by the Florentines with Cordona in 1512. It was published by Fabroni in his "*Vita di Leone X.*," and does not in the least correspond with Guicciardini's account of it. According to him, Florence had joined the League and entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with Spain. Now, Ranke continues, the treaty neither mentions the League, nor mentions an unconditional alliance with the King of Spain; it only states that the Florentines pledged their word to defend the Neapolitan territory for three years and six months. It does not state that they pledged themselves to pay the Viceroy the sums promised him by the Medici, as Guicciardini affirms. And even what the latter says of the two hundred Neapolitan spearmen given to the service of the Florentines, and of the restitution of the Medici's possessions, is only true in part. Therefore—according to Professor Ranke—Guicciardini has favoured us with an imaginary treaty, that while truly corresponding with what really happened, did not so correspond with the far more honourable terms stipulated by the Florentines, and which were not respected. But in the "*Storia d'Italia*" two totally separate cases are described, which are massed together by Professor Ranke, and hence the confusion. The Florentines, as we read in the "*History*," joined the League and bound themselves to acquit the obligations contracted by the Medici, by paying forty thousand ducats to the king of the Romans, eighty thousand to the Viceroy for the army, and twenty thousand for himself, *i.e.*, a total of one hundred and forty thousand ducats. These sums were actually paid, and are mentioned by many other writers, including even Vettori, who adds that the said sums had been promised and voted by the Florentines before the taking of Prato. *Besides doing this*, continues Guicciardini, *they made a league with the King of Aragon, on reciprocal terms* (and this is the treaty reported by Fabroni) regarding a fixed number of men-at-arms for the defence of the States and stipulating that the Florentines should take into their service two hundred men-at-arms, subjects of that king, thereby meaning, though without open mention of the fact, that the Marchese delle Palude was the captain to be engaged. ("*Storia d'Italia*," vol. v. bk. xi. pp. 63-64.) Now if it be certain that the 140,000 ducats were paid, it is likewise certain that the adhesion of Florence to the League was an implied and necessary result of the restoration of the Medici. And if, like Guicciardini, we separate all this from the treaty afterwards concluded with the Viceroy on the 12th of September, we shall see that on this point also the "*History*" keeps to the truth.

Professor Ranke brings forward further examples of what he calls Guicciardini's false accounts. The jealousies aroused between Alexander VI., Cesare and Giovanni Borgia, on account of Lucrezia, daughter of the one and sister of the others, were scarcely mentioned by any writer previous to Guicciardini; and the latter's tales were derived from the epigrams of Pontano and Sannazzaro, certain hints in the letters of Pietro Martire, and a libel reported in Burchard's "*Diary*." But Pietro Martire made many blunders, nor can libels and epigrams have weight

¹ *Vide* my own preface to the "*Dispacci di A. Giustinian*," and a critical essay on the "*Despatches*" by G. E. Saltini, accompanied by new documents in the "*Archivio Storico Italiano*," Terza Serie, vol. xxvi. 1877.

as sources of history. To all this it may be replied that since the researches of Gregorovius and the numerous documents on the Borgia which have been recently published, this accusation can no longer be maintained. Guicciardini only stated what had been previously stated and believed by very many chroniclers, very many Italian ambassadors, and he continually consulted the latter's reports. Among the extracts from letters and documents comprised in the "Memorie" we find several "Ex Archivio" dated 1497, others "Ex Marcello," namely from papers in the hands of the secretary, Marcello Virgilio. Among the latter there is an entry as follows:—*June. The death of Caudia accomplished by his brother's order, from envy, and on account of their sister* ("Memorie Istoriche," vol. i. The pages are not numbered regularly). We cite this instance only; but there is a considerable number of notes relating to the Borgia, which more than prove that even if any doubts still exist as to many of the deeds attributed to the Borgia, we have certainly no reason to suppose them, either that Guicciardini invented them or that they were merely derived from libels and epigrams. For instance, it is true that he erred in believing that the Pope died through taking at supper a dose of poison prepared by him for another. The "Despatches" of A. Giustinian prove this tale to be false, and that the Pope really died of Roman fever. But, at the time, the story of the poison was very generally credited; Giovio asserted it to be true; even Professor Ranke accepts it in his "History of the Popes," and shows as much liking for Giovio as hostility to Guicciardini, although the latter was a far more faithful and trustworthy narrator.

In treating of the general arrangement of Guicciardini's "History," Ranke justly remarks that it is too much in the old style of the Annals. Every year the author makes a fresh start, and thus continually interrupts his narrative of all events beginning in one year, and carried on through others. This is a very serious defect, seeing that Guicciardini treats of a vast chain of events which thus are frequently cut short, and then taken up again. However, as he generally relegates secondary matters to the close of each year, after previously attending to all principal events, this gives a certain orderliness to the narrative. Also, the frequent speeches introduced in it are of considerable use in explaining events, and connecting them in their due order. Besides these reasonable remarks, Ranke might also add that the division of the work into books and chapters is not made year by year and month by month; but rather arranged according to the nature of the events described, thus greatly conducing to order and clearness. At any rate, it is necessary to remember that, Machiavelli alone excepted, no writer had then entirely discarded the annalistic form, although all were endeavouring to shake it off. In the "Florentine History," treating of a smaller number of facts, Guicciardini achieved a far better arrangement; but his "History of Italy" dealt with a much wider and more complicated series of events. Even at this day the enormous difficulty of establishing a logical sequence between them is not yet entirely overcome, and in the sixteenth century was necessarily insurmountable. Hence no writer could avoid more or less recurrence to the annalistic form.

Professor Ranke finally inquires how a "History" combining so many defects could achieve so great a success? Chiefly, he thinks, because of the daring fashion in which Guicciardini writes of the Popes, and his unflattering revelations of the designs and ambitions of princes. But for sincerity of speech regarding popes and potentates, many of our historians and chroniclers of the fifteenth and sixteenth century are equally deserving of praise. Sincerity was the result, less of a writer's independence of character than of the need felt by many, at that day, of examining facts, describing them as they really were, and seeking out and expounding their causes from the objective point of view. And Guicciardini experienced this need

to a greater extent than any other man of his time, although in accordance with weaknesses common to all mortals, personal vanity or political partisanship occasionally obscured his vision. In the main, however, it is our decided opinion that both in rendering the real truth of historical events, and in expounding their real and immediate causes, their real and immediate consequences, he ranks as the foremost historian among the many of genuine eminence produced by his age.

At no other period, Professor Ranke very justly remarks, did men take so lively and general a part in public affairs, or give them so much thought, as in the Italy, and particularly in the Florence, of that day. Hence every special history was connected with events in general, and consequently acquired a general importance. This quality is most clearly present in the speeches contained in Guicciardini's "History of Italy." To arrive at a thorough comprehension of the merit of that work, it should be kept in mind that whereas other Italian histories of the period are invariably more or less provincial, this one alone is a really general history. The author has at last escaped from the narrow bounds of local ideas, and dwells more at length upon Italian than upon Florentine events. He was neither exclusively municipal nor exclusively clerical, nor was he sufficiently wedded to ecclesiastical interests to forfeit his mental independence. Either attitude alone would have restricted his intellect, but being able to regard affairs from both points of view, we find him able to estimate events in the general and independent manner, that while only becoming the common attribute of historians in the eighteenth century, had been already initiated by Guicciardini two hundred years before. Accordingly, his work must always take rank as one of the grandest historical productions of which we are possessed.

These considerations, barely outlined in the first edition of Ranke's work, but somewhat more developed in the second, do full justice to Guicciardini, and define the extent and value of his powers, with a penetration and originality truly worthy of the great German critic. Nevertheless, he continues to believe that the merits to which he alludes are confined to the discourses, and absent from the narrative itself, in which, as he puts it, there is no hope of finding the objective truth of events. "Nur darf man nicht in den Büchern den objectiven Thatbestand der Ereignisse in den Händen zu haben glauben" (p. 57 of second edition). We, on the contrary, have sought to prove that this truth is to be found in the narrative, and that the charges of inexactitude brought against Guicciardini are very rarely justified in full. But notwithstanding all that we have had to say, we are also bound to add that although in this early work Professor Ranke shows unjust hostility to Guicciardini, he was, nevertheless, the first to trace out the right path towards a complete critical appreciation of the "Storia d'Italia," and that the few general considerations he gives in conclusion are thoroughly admirable. Had he been able to consult the manuscripts of our great Italian historian, undoubtedly he would have pronounced a different judgment, given us a complete and definitive criticism. We can only hope that some one will undertake a new critical edition of the "History," verifying every point by reference to the manuscripts, seeking out, with their aid, the original sources of the work, and judging it, if without the undue harshness of the illustrious Ranke, yet always in accordance with the method traced out by him.¹

¹ We must here express our thanks to Count Francesco Guicciardini for his kindness in allowing us to examine the manuscripts of his renowned ancestor. Our friends, Professor C. Paoli and A. Gherardi, of the Florentine Archives, have always been generous with their help, and it is therefore a pleasure to take this opportunity of expressing our gratitude. We also beg to thank the Superintendents of the Tuscan and Venetian Archives for the great courtesy and attention invariably received from them.



CHAPTER XVI.

The advance of the Imperial army into Lombardy—Guicciardini as President of Romagna, and as Lieutenant at the camp—Machiavelli's return to public life—His journey to Rome—His mission to Guicciardini at Faenza—His journey to Venice—His correspondence with Guicciardini—His nomination as chancellor of the *Procuratori delle Mura*—His superintendence of the works for the fortification of the city.



THE imperial army now in possession of the Duchy of Milan, and commanded by Constable de Bourbon, was confidently preparing for its onward march, and fresh events still more fatal to Italy had become inevitable. Upon these events the attention of Italian politicians was now fixed, for all were in one way or another concerned in them. Even Machiavelli was again drawn into the vortex of public business, and frequently despatched to the camp of the allies, where he found Guicciardini established as the Pope's lieutenant. These two Florentines exerted all their energy, all their skill, and fruitlessly displayed the best points of their respective characters. But Machiavelli being already advanced in years and near to his death, still in a subordinate position, and in the service of a State that was itself dependent on the caprice of a Pope, could do little more than manifest the excellence of his intentions, his ardent patriotism and his grief for the unhappy fate of his country. Guicciardini, on the other hand, was in his prime and invested with very high authority ; so for him this proved the most splendid phase of his political career. He had a representative in Rome in the person of Messer Cesare Colombo, to whom he constantly sent despatches, of which the contents were to be communicated to the Pope and the Sacred

College. These despatches give us a faithful portraiture of the events of the time, and bear emphatic testimony to the breadth of Guicciardini's political sagacity and excellence as a statesman.

While holding the post of governor in Emilia, he had won much applause by his great energy and promptitude during the war in that part of Italy. Accordingly, in 1524, he was nominated President of Romagna, with the mission of pacifying a province long torn by party strife, and stained by continual crimes. His intention was to first terrify the guilty by rigorous measures, and then rule with clemency. But after insisting on the infliction of capital punishment in the case of a criminal, "plunged up to his eyes in guilt," he discovered that he had to face far greater difficulties than he had expected.¹ The malefactors appealed to the Pope for protection, had themselves recommended to mercy and obtained safe-conducts. This quickly caused an increase of crime, and weakened the authority of the President, who became irritated and alarmed.² A certain Bastiano Orsello, who had killed his grandfather, and was accused of having committed sixteen or eighteen murders during a riot, as well as innumerable acts of rapine, obtained the protection both of Giovanni dei Medici and the Pope.³ And while Guicciardini complained of one criminal, another was pardoned, so that he was driven to exclaim in disgust: "It were better to acquit all the assassins and beg them to commit worse crimes! By heaven, this has been a fine caprice! Murderers have been seen at large, who had played at ball with their victims' heads in the public squares of Forli." ⁴ Yet he was able to profit by the graver anxieties assailing the Pope, and carry out his own measures in such fashion that by the close of the year he could boast of having established order in Romagna.⁵

He then turned his attention to the events taking place outside Romagna, giving decisions and counsels of so much justice and truth that they may sometimes be regarded in the light of prophecies. Shortly before the battle of Pavia, he declared it his opinion that the Imperialists would prevail.⁶ And when his

¹ "Opere Inedite," vol. viii. p. 28, letter of 1st of June, 1524.

² Ibid., vol. viii. p. 66 and fol., letter of 12th of July.

³ Ibid., vol. viii. pp. 66 and 100, letters of the 12th of July and 7th of September.

⁴ Ibid., vol. viii. pp. 121 and 123, letter from Forli of 7th and 8th of September.

⁵ Ibid., vol. viii. pp. 126 and 153, letters of the 12th of October and 28th of November.

⁶ Ibid., vol. viii. p. 171, letter of the 19th of January, 1525.

words were verified, he added : "Henceforth everything will turn to our disadvantage. The Italians are not strong enough for resistance, and capitulation will bring about our enslavement.¹ This would be the moment for daring designs, and I should applaud him who would adopt a course having prospects equal to its perils.² It is vain to hope for aught from the French, who take no thought for the morrow and will be ready to consent to everything for the sake of releasing their king. I well understand that just now every good brain is puzzled ; but he who sees that by standing still he will be overwhelmed by destruction, ought to prefer the worst dangers to certain death."³ And upon hearing of the capture of Morone, whom he had never trusted, he wrote : "Now the Imperialists will delay no longer. They will perhaps decide on taking instant possession of the Milanese duchy, and probably succeed in doing so through the weakness of the duke, or by some fresh twist on the part of Morone. And we have nothing to hope for, because they will push still farther on to occupy the States of the Church, or to overthrow the Florentine State, or to do even worse should opportunity occur. The Emperor wishes to be master of Italy, and can never be the friend of any one likely to prove an obstacle to that purpose. It is vain to hope for aught from a treaty with France, who is now prostrate, for it would always be to our hurt. No treaty could be durable without the release of the king, who would observe no conditions which might prove to his disadvantage. The truth is that Cæsar will accomplish his purpose while the others are slumbering ; and thus will prevail over all, not by superior strength, but by the *fatali omnium ignavia*.⁴ These words seem to clearly foretell the progress of the Imperialists towards the sack of Rome and the siege of Florence. Nor did Guicciardini alter his opinion on learning that an imperial envoy was proposing terms, and that the Pope was in treaty with him. "The Emperor," he wrote, "seeks to crush France and the Venetians, and must first therefore assure himself of the Pope, and this he will do as soon as he has completed the Milanese business. In any case he will become the arbiter of Italy. The Pope will be a sovereign in name only, and will for the present be mocked with plans which will end in

¹ "Opere Inedite," vol. viii. p. 201, letter from Forlì, of 25th of March, 1525.

² Ibid., vol. viii. p. 246, letter from Ravenna, of 28th of May, 1525.

³ Ibid., vol. viii. p. 257, letter from Faenza, 15th of June, 1525.

⁴ Ibid., vol. viii. p. 321, letter of 23rd of October, 1525.

smoke.¹ But I have the greatest fear that he will adopt the most unworthy course. Those dreading war should be shown the perils of peace. Over-prudence is now imprudence, and it is no longer possible to undertake measured enterprises. It is indispensable to resort to arms to avoid a peace that makes us slaves."² And this even was verified. War became inevitable, and Guicciardini was called to Rome, to be first asked for his advice and then despatched to the camp as Lieutenant-General. He then entrusted the government of Romagna to his brother Jacopo, leaving him long and minute written instructions affording additional proofs of his aptitude as a ruler.³

Now at last the moment had come for Machiavelli's reappearance upon the political stage. We find him still of the same temper; still buffeted by fortune; occupying very modest posts, exalted by vivid enthusiasm for his Italian motherland, and striving vainly to save it; ever dominated and transported by his constant ideals. These ideals of his so often causing his contemporaries to regard him as a fantastic visionary, seem to us almost sublime and prophetic, exactly because they are more in sympathy with our time than with his own, and show a penetrative intuition of the future, rather than a practical knowledge of the present. Guicciardini, on the other hand, whose main gift lay in practical knowledge of actualities, had better fortune and greater power. Colder than Machiavelli, impassible and calculating, he might well have addressed his great contemporary in the words applied by Dante to Farinata degli Uberti:—

"E' par che voi veggiate, se ben odo,
Dinanzi quel che il tempo seco adduce,
E nel presente tenete altro modo."⁴

Even Machiavelli seems to have been often aware of the contradictory conditions by which he was surrounded, although forcing himself to believe his contemporaries and his country, whose defects he so clearly recognized, far better than they were and capable of heroic resolves. Then, deeply discouraged, he would suddenly give vent to his satiric, biting, cynical spirit, and indulge in unexpected and irresistible outbursts. But before long he again reverted to his

¹ "Opere Inedite," vol. viii. p. 360, letter of 11th of December, 1525.

² Ibid., vol. viii. p. 366, letter of 24th of December.

³ Ibid., vol. viii. p. 393 and fol.

⁴ "Inferno," Canto x., lines 97-99.

ideal theories, clinging to them with unshaken faith down to the last hour of his life.

In the early part of 1525, before the tide of fresh calamity had risen to its height, he was gloomily meditating on the news of the day, and finishing the eighth book of his "Histories," which comes down to the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent. He was anxious to present it in person to the Pope, to whom it was dedicated, in the hope of thus obtaining some pecuniary aid towards its continuation. He mentioned the matter in a letter to Vettori, who, however, gave him very little encouragement. Nevertheless, on the 8th of March, Vettori wrote from Rome to say that the Pope had questioned him concerning the "Storie," and he had replied that he had read part of the work and thought it would give satisfaction. He had also said that he had discouraged Machiavelli from coming to offer it in person, because this did not seem to be a fitting moment. The Pope's answer, however, was: he ought to come, for I am sure that his books will please and be eagerly read. Nevertheless, Vettori, with his usual frigidity, ended his letter by saying: "Yet you must not deceive yourself, for even if you came, you might be left empty-handed in times such as these."¹

After much hesitation, Machiavelli at last determined to visit Rome, and not only found the Pope well disposed towards him, but that even Filippo Strozzi and Jacopo Salviati were readier to give him practical help than Vettori, who was only lavish of words. Salviati in fact had already endeavoured to find some post for him; but without success, as the Pope had not smiled on the proposal.² Filippo Strozzi was more fortunate. By means of Francesco del Nero, he was able to inform Machiavelli, who had already left Rome, that his Holiness was willing to give him a fresh subsidy, in order that he might go on with his "Histories."³

¹ "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. No. 34, letter of the 8th of March, 1524-25, Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xiii.

² Letters of the 3rd and 17th of May, 1525, written by Salviati to his son the Cardinal. The first tells him of the proposal to send Machiavelli with him to Spain; the second says: "We must not count upon having Niccolò Machiavelli, for I see that the Pope takes but slowly to that idea." Desjardins, "Négociations Diplomatiques," vol. ii. pp. 840, 841.

³ Letter of Francesco del Nero, dated 27th of July, 1525. It is among the "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. No. 45. *Vide* Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xiv. It begins thus: "Io ebbi una vostra da Roma, ad laquale feci risposta." This proves the fact of Machiavelli's visit to Rome at this period,

In fact, the subsidy was afterwards granted him, and consisted of another hundred ducats.¹

The real reason why, notwithstanding the Pope's affability, Machiavelli left Rome without concluding anything to his own advantage, and even before being assured of the promised sum for the "*Histories*," is one that reflects much honour upon his character. Arriving in Rome after the battle of Pavia, when the minds of all Italians were held in suspense by the imminent danger of the imperial army taking the offensive at any moment, he almost immediately renounced all thought of personal interests, and left his friends to attend to them. He spoke to the Pope only of the best measures to be adopted in the present state of affairs, and of how to fortify Florence against any sudden attack. To Pontiff, cardinals, and all whom he met at Court, he earnestly expounded his old idea of a national militia, trying to convince every one that the only efficacious remedy would now be to arm the people, and summon them to the defence of their country against the threatening foreign host. And he spoke with so much heat and eloquence, as to at last succeed in convincing the Pope and a few of those about him. In fact, in the June of the same year, he was sent with a Brief to Guicciardini in Romagna, to explain his design, and try to carry it into effect there, among a population well trained to arms. Jacopo Salviati and Schonberg spoke of the plan to Colombo, begging him also to address Guicciardini on the matter. The latter, being perhaps the coolest and most practical head in Italy at that moment, wrote the following reply from Faenza on the 15th of June, 1525: "I have noted what is said about the coming of Machiavelli. I shall await his arrival, in order to comprehend his design, before giving my opinion; for it is a matter requiring much consideration, and so you must tell the others also. Meanwhile, inquire into the Pope's object in making this proposal, for if he intends it as a remedy

seldom noted by other writers. Further proofs are also to be found in the letters that we have already quoted.

The undated letter mentioned at p. 281 of this volume might be supposed to have been written by Marietta on this occasion, but from the fact of her mentioning a new-born boy and a little girl still in her babyhood. Besides, Marietta seemed to allude to a long absence on the part of her husband, and on this occasion he made a very short stay in Rome.

¹ "*Opere*," vol. viii. pp. 177-181, Machiavelli's letter to Guicciardini, without date.

for present dangers, it is a measure that cannot be executed in time."¹

On the 19th he wrote that Machiavelli had arrived and explained the scheme of the Ordinance. "Certainly, if this thing could be carried to the desired end, it would be one of the most useful and praiseworthy works that his Holiness could undertake. And I should not be afraid of giving arms to the people, for with a few good regulations and severe discipline everything could be managed; but I would not arm a population such as this one. For Romagna, being lacerated by cruel enmities, is split into two great factions, still known by the denominations of Guelphs and Ghibellines, the former relying on France, the latter on the Empire. The Church has no true friends in either party, and therefore, if at war with the Emperor, would be in great danger from having armed his friends, in the hope of employing them to her own advantage. This enterprise would need to be founded on the love of the people, and the people of Romagna have not the slightest love for the Church. There is no security here either for life or property, and therefore men look to foreign princes, upon whom all depend in this province. And to hope to compose the Militia Ordinance, according to Machiavelli's desire, of men independent of either faction, would be equal to composing it of none. Nevertheless, if the thing is to be attempted at all risks, I will throw myself into it heart and soul, and so, too, should his Holiness, for once started it would have to be made of more importance than anything else." He then went on to say that the Pope's idea of burdening the already exhausted Communes with the expense of the project was most dangerous, and would only, from the outset, irritate them against an institution for which their sympathy was indispensable.²

On the 23rd of June he again wrote to express his doubts, invited Colombo to first communicate his letter to Schonberg and Salviati, taking note of their advice and opinions, and then show it to the Pope, remembering to most carefully observe "his words and gestures."³ However, while he was so full of anxiety, seeing the Pope about to plunge without reflection or energy into so uncertain a scheme, Clement's enthusiasm had already burnt out

¹ "Opere Inedite," vol. viii. p. 263.

² Ibid., vol. viii. p. 266, letter cxxx. of the "Presidenza della Romagna," the second dated 19th of June, 1525, from Faenza.

³ Ibid., vol. viii. p. 270, letter cxxxi. of 23rd of June.

as quickly as a blaze of straw, and all the more quickly on finding that it would involve expenditure of his own funds. He did not even take the trouble to send a reply. Accordingly, Machiavelli, after vainly waiting for letters until the 26th of July, became persuaded that neither Guicciardini nor the Pope had the courage to arm the people, and unwilling to waste any more time, went back to Florence stating that he should there await their commands.¹

He sent Guicciardini several letters from Florence, but nothing more was said respecting the Ordinance. The correspondence was devoted to private affairs and to the jests by which both sought to distract their minds from the present miseries of their country and the greater ills by which it was threatened. But it was impossible to avoid all mention of these dangers, and they alluded to them with bitter pain. On the 17th of August Machiavelli said a word in reference to the proposed marriage of one of Guicciardini's daughters to a wealthy Florentine, expressed his satisfaction that his "*Mandragola*" should have given his friend so much pleasure as to make him wish to have it acted at Faenza during the following carnival, and promised to attend the performance. He sent him a medicine, from which he said that he had often derived great benefit, especially when suffering from overwork. He added that he might soon have to go to Venice, in which case he should certainly halt at Faenza on his way back, in order to visit his friends.²

In fact, on the 19th of August, Machiavelli was sent to Venice on business of slight importance, at the instance of the consuls of the Woollen Guild, and of the Florentine consuls in Roumania, also known as the *Provveditori* of the Levant. Certain Florentine merchants returning with much money from the East, on board a Venetian brigantine, found on arriving in one of the ports of the Republic that the vessel was in the power of one G. B. Donati, who accompanied the Turkish Orator. This Donati called the merchants together, and after behaving to them in a manner "too insulting for description, forced them to pay a ransom of 1,500 gold

¹ "*Opere Inedite*," vol. viii. p. 287, letter cxxxix. of 26th of July.

² *Ibid.*, vol. viii. p. 167, letter lvii. As some writers have thought that Machiavelli's death was caused by abuse of this medicine, it is as well to say it was a mild purgative, and that aloes—the only potent drug in it—was used in too small a proportion to do any injury. Mons. Artaud, author of "*Machiavel, son genie et ses erreurs*," took the trouble to have the original prescription made up, and found the pills to be very mild aids to digestion.

ducats."¹ Accordingly, the consuls of the Guild now demanded compensation from the Serene Republic, on the ground that Donati was a Venetian subject. This mission was speedily executed, and the only documents that we have relating to it consist of Machiavelli's credentials, his letters of instruction, and the papers containing the statement of the case.² But we learn that a rumour was afloat in Florence at that time to the effect that Machiavelli had tempted fortune in Venice, and "won a prize of two or three thousand ducats in the lottery." Filippo dei Nerli wrote to him on the subject, also adding that Machiavelli's name had been put on the list of citizens eligible for political employment, for as he had been recommended by some ladies having a kindness for him, the Accoppiatori had shut an eye.³ And he proceeded to cut jokes upon this topic, in a tone that is not very easy to understand at the present day. But we perceive that some favour had been shown to Machiavelli, inasmuch as he had never fulfilled all the conditions of eligibility rigorously demanded by the law concerning offices of the State.⁴ As regards his winnings in the lottery, they were either very insignificant or purely fictitious, for we find no allusion to them elsewhere, and two or three thousand ducats would have entirely changed Machiavelli's position, since he had never possessed so large a sum. And although Canossa, the Ambassador to Venice, saw him twice during his short stay, and gave news of him to Vettori, he made no allusion to the rumoured prize. He only wrote that Machiavelli and he had spoken on public matters, regarding which there was nought to say, "save that we are falling into slavery, or rather buying it. All are aware of this and no one tries to prevent it."⁵

On returning to Florence, apparently without having seen Guicciardini, who was then at Imola, Machiavelli found his son Bernardo ill, and a letter⁶ awaiting him from his other son Lodovico, a very impetuous youth, who was always in hot water at Adrianople, where he was engaged in business. He now wrote

¹ "Opere," vol. vii. p. 454.

² Ibid., vol. vii. pp. 450-455; "Opere" (P. M.), vol. vi. pp. 220-224.

³ Ibid., vol. viii. p. 171, letter lviii. from Florence, 6th of September, 1525.

⁴ This may possibly be the reason of Ranke's belief that Machiavelli had not the rights of a citizen. He had not the so-called *honours*, the privilege of many, but not of all citizens.

⁵ Letter of the 15th of September, 1525, "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. No. 12, Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xv.

⁶ "Opere," vol. viii. p. 174, letter lix., without date.

thence to complain of a certain priest who would not resign a church appertaining to the Machiavelli family near St. Andrea in Percussina. He threatened to come over and obtain justice for himself, unless his father could set things straight without delay. "I cannot see," he said in conclusion,¹ "why we should wait so long. It seems to be like putting out two of our own eyes in order to put out one of that fellow's."

To these petty worries was added the gravest anxiety about public affairs. Morone was in prison, Pescara advancing on Milan, the Pope uncertain and irresolute as ever. The letters of Guicciardini and Machiavelli fluctuated between hopelessness and an apparently cynical mirth, that was often the laughter of despair. In a letter without date, Machiavelli sent his friend explanations of the meaning of certain Florentine phrases contained in the "Mandragola." He promised to compose some new canzonets to be sung between the acts, and to send to Faenza the celebrated Barbera and her troop of singers.² In another letter, also undated, and signed: *Niccolò Machiavelli, historic, comic, and tragic* author, he began by speaking at length of the marriage that Guicciardini had so much at heart; and then, with a sudden change of subject, went on to say: "Morone has been seized, and the duchy of Milan is done for; and just as that man waited to be snuffed out, so will all the other princes wait for it,³ nor is there any hope of mending matters: *Sic datum desuper*. Veggo d'Alagna tornar lo fiordaliso. E nel Vicario suo, &c. *Nosti versus coeterea per te ipsum lege*."⁴ And then, with another sudden change: "Let us have a merry Carnival, and engage a lodging for the Barbera among those friars, and if they do not lose

¹ This is the letter already quoted elsewhere, of 14th of August, 1525. *Vide* Appendix of the Italian edition, document i.

² "Opere," vol. viii. p. 174. The canzonets to which he refers are not, in fact, included in the early editions of the play, but were only published at a much later date.

³ That is, all our other princes, by passively waiting, will come to the same end.

⁴ "Veggio in Alagna entrar lo fiordaliso
E nel vicario suo Cristo esser catto."¹¹
(Dante, "Purgatorio," xx. 86, 87.)

As all know, these verses allude to the imprisonment of Boniface VIII. The treatment of this Pope at the hands of the Colonna in Anagni (Alagna) really resembles, as we shall presently see, the behaviour of the same family to Clement VII. in Rome.

their heads I won't take any payment, and recommend me to the Maliscotta, and let me know how the arrangements for the comedy are going on, and when you intend to have it played. I have had that increase of a hundred ducats for my 'History.' Now I am beginning to write again, and vent my rage by accusing the princes who have done everything to bring us to this pass."¹

And the correspondence continued in this strain. Writing on the 19th of December, Machiavelli recurred to the affair of the marriage, and, to find a way of bringing it about, suggested that a sum of money should be obtained from the Pope to swell the maiden's dower. Guicciardini, being a prouder and more practical man, hesitated about addressing Clement VII. on matters of that kind, when the States of the Church and all Italy were in so precarious a condition. Pescara was now dead, and the Italian potentates seemed disposed to slumber, no little to the increase of the general danger. Even Machiavelli concluded his letter by saying: Every one now feels reassured, "and believing that there is plenty of time, gives time to the enemy. And I end by thinking that from this quarter there will never proceed any noble or daring deed enabling us either to live or die with honour, so great is the fear I discern in these citizens, and so great their vileness, with regard to those who would devour us."²

Guicciardini replied on the 26th, and began his letter by fresh reference to the comedy, "for it seems to me by no means the least important of the matters in hand, and at any rate a practicable thing, being one in our own power, so that it is no waste of time to think of it, and recreation is more necessary than ever amid so much turmoil."

He did not know what to say on public affairs, seeing that every one disapproved of the only opinion that he held to be worth anything. "The evils of peace will be recognized when the opportunity for war is past. We alone persist in awaiting the coming storm in the open road, and we shall not be able to say that our power was torn from us, but that *turpiter clapsa sit de manibus*."³

It appears that Guicciardini and Machiavelli were not alone in trying to distract their thoughts by amusing themselves with comedies, for all Italians, during these terrible years, sought diversion in carnival festivities. The Cazzuola company in Florence,

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. p. 177, letter lx., undated, but written at the end of November or beginning of December, 1525.

² Ibid., vol. viii. p. 181, letter lxi.

³ Ibid., vol. viii. p. 183, letter lxii.

which had shortly before given capital representations of the "Mandragola," was now, in the carnival of 1525, performing the "Clizia" in the garden expressly laid out for that purpose by Jacopo Fornaciaio, near the S. Frediano gate. The scenery was painted by Bastiano da San Gallo, who, in consequence of his skill in work of this kind, was nicknamed Aristotle.¹ On this occasion so many grand festivities and banquets were offered to the nobles, burghers, and working classes, that they were a subject of talk all over Italy. It seems that Machiavelli threw himself into these diversions with no less zest than the others;² and that Filippo dei Nerli, who had little affection for him, while ostensibly his friend, congratulated him upon his good spirits, although professing to others to be highly scandalized by Niccolò's conduct. Two private companies in Venice were at the same time giving performances respectively of the "Mandragola" and of the "Menæchmi" of Plautus. The latter work was so coldly received in comparison, that its actors invited the other company to their house to repeat the modern play.³ And Machiavelli was pressed by the Florentine merchants in Venice to send them another work from his pen to be brought out the following May. The performance organized

¹ Vasari, "Vita dei Pittori," the Le Monnier edition, vol. xi. p. 204, in the "Vita di Aristotele da San Gallo," and vol. xii. p. 16, in the "Vita di Giovan Francesco Rustici."

² In one of his letters to Machiavelli, dated from Modena, 22nd of February 1525, and published in the "Opere" (P. M.), vol. i. p. 91, he congratulated him with a great show of affection, and styled him *Carissimo et come fratello honorando*. In another written to Francesco del Nero on the 1st of March of the same year, he, on the contrary, professed to be vastly scandalized by the amusements in which Machiavelli had indulged, and blamed him for so doing. *Vide Appendix III.* of the Italian edition, document xvi. The date being the 1st of March, there may be some doubt as to the year; but from other letters written at that time by Nerli from Modena, it is plain that he did not date by the Florentine, but by the usual style. Therefore Passerini was mistaken in declaring that the letter in question was of the year 1526; it is of 1525. How could Machiavelli in the January of 1526 promise Guicciardini that he would go to Faenza to witness the performance of the "Mandragola"? He must at least have referred to the fact of his being obliged almost at the same moment to attend the representation of the "Clizia" in Florence.

³ See the letter of Giovanni Mannelli to Machiavelli, dated Venice, 28th of February, 1525, in the "Opere" (P. M.), vol. i. p. 90. In this instance, also, Passerini believes the year to be indicated according to the Florentine style; but the matter is doubtful at the least. It is certain that when away from their own State the Florentines sometimes computed the years in their own style, and at others according to that of the place of their abode.

in Romagna by Guicciardini for the Carnival of 1526,¹ seems never to have taken place, in consequence of the President being obliged to make a hasty journey to Rome. The news of the treaty arranged between France and Spain for the release of the king, although upon what conditions was not as yet precisely known, kept men's minds in greater suspense than before, and it was necessary to be prepared for emergencies.

The letters of the two friends now began to dwell upon this news with greater persistence. Guicciardini, as we have seen, had long held the opinion that the Emperor would release the king, but that in no case would the latter remain faithful to the agreed terms. Machiavelli, on the contrary, clung to the erroneous belief that the king would not be liberated, but would in any case remain true to his word. And even after the news of the treaty was generally known, he found it difficult to change his mistaken views. He wrote to Filippo Strozzi on the subject, and also on the 15th of March to Guicciardini, saying that his head was confused by this treaty, and repeating that either the king would not be released, or would observe the conditions demanded of him. "It is true that in this way he would cause the ruin of Italy, and might even be exposed to the loss of his kingdom ;" but having, as you say, a French brain, this dread would not affect him as it might another. And whether he be released or not, there will be war in Italy all the same. For us, two ways only are open : either to throw ourselves on the mercy of the victor and furnish him with money, or to fly to arms. The former course is not satisfactory, for the enemy would first take our money and then our life ; accordingly there is nothing left for us but to fight. At this point Machiavelli indulges in another of the daring ideas which were so essential his own.

"I shall now say something that you will think madness ; I

¹ It is clear from Machiavelli's letters that he had absolutely promised to go, but after all did not go. On the 3rd of January, 1525-6, he wrote : "I will come at any rate, nor shall anything but illness, from which may God preserve me, keep me away ; and I will come after the end of this month, at any time you may appoint." He added that the Barbera was detained by certain lovers, but that nevertheless he hoped to be able to send her. "*Opere*," vol. viii. p. 185, letter lxiii. This letter is followed by that of the 15th of March, from which we learn that "The Barbera is now there ; if you can be of any service to her, I recommend her to your good offices, for she gives me far more anxiety than the Emperor." Guicciardini was in Rome at that moment, as we learn from his "*Opere Inedite*." The Barbera had probably gone there for other performances and in search of adventures.

shall suggest a design that you will consider either foolhardy or ridiculous ; nevertheless, these times demand audacious, unusual, and strange resolves. And every one who knows how to reason of this world is aware that the people is changeable and foolish ; nevertheless, taking it for what it is, it may often be said to do that which it should. There were rumours in Florence a few days ago that Signor Giovanni dei Medici was collecting a company of adventurers to make war wherever it best suited him. This news set me thinking that the people was teaching us that which ought to be done. I hold it to be the general belief, that there is no leader in Italy whom soldiers would more willingly follow, nor of whom the Spaniards could have greater fear and respect. Likewise every one holds Signor Giovanni to be daring, impetuous, full of grand ideas, and disposed to adopt great decisions. It might therefore be possible, by secretly gaining him recruits, and the greatest possible number of horses and foot soldiers, to enable him to raise an army." "This might speedily disturb the Spaniards' brains and force them to change the plans by which they hope to be able to destroy Tuscany and the Church without encountering any obstacles. It might even change the mind of the king, for it would show him that he had to deal with living men. And mark this, that if the king be not stirred by living things and by force, he will observe the treaty and leave you to your fate, for you have too often been against him, or remained passive spectators, for him not to fear that the same might occur this time likewise."¹

Filippo Strozzi showed the Pope the letter he had received from Machiavelli, and also spoke to him of the proposal contained in that addressed to Guicciardini. But these ideas were too daring, too patriotic to win acceptance from Clement VII., who was bewildered by the mere mention of them. He replied that the king would soon be released, and faithfully observe the terms prescribed, so that Italy would be left at the Emperor's mercy. He refused to entertain the proposal of arming Giovanni dei Medici, on the ground that this would be equivalent to openly declaring war against the Emperor. In fact, Giovanni dei Medici could not raise an army without money, and were that furnished by the Pope, the latter would at once become the virtual head of the enterprise.² Thus, in the same way that nothing had come

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. p. 188 and fol., letter lxiv., of 15th of March, 1525-6.

² Ibid., vol. viii. p. 193, letter lxx., of Filippo Strozzi, from Rome, the last day of March, 1526.

of the Ordinance, nothing came of the ex-Secretary's new plan.

Accordingly Machiavelli now devoted himself to studying the means of fortifying the walls of Florence, a subject upon which he had held a long conversation in Rome with the Pope, who recommended him to construct works of sufficient strength to encourage the people to believe that they might withstand any attack. But he urged the construction of an entirely new circle of walls on the San Miniato side, and this was an impossibility on account of the hill of that name. In order to include it within the new walls, too wide and consequently too indefensible a circuit would be required. If, on the other hand, the existing circuit were to be narrowed, a whole quarter of the city would be left outside the defences. It would entail severe loss to demolish this quarter; yet if left standing it would be instantly seized and fortified by the enemy.¹ Machiavelli, therefore, after carefully inspecting the walls in the company of Pietro Navarro, drew up a detailed and accurate report, pointing out what works were required, insisting still more urgently than before on the expediency of only fortifying the existing walls by means of additional towers, fortalices, ditches and other defences.² On the 17th of May he wrote to Guicciardini, who was still in Rome, saying that his head was "so full of bastions" that he could think of nothing else. He told him how a law had been passed in Florence for the formation of a new board of magistrates to superintend the fortifications; and that if matters went on in the way expected, he, Machiavelli, would be the new chancellor. He begged that the Pope might be pressed to begin furnishing the money needed for the commencement of the works. Then, after alluding to the intelligence received from France touching the dangers to which the Pope had been exposed, and to the last news from Lombardy of the disorders in the imperial army, he concluded by remarking that all these things clearly showed "how easy it were to rid Italy of those wretches. For Heaven's sake, do not let this opportunity slip. Remember that bad counsellors and worse ministers had, virtually, imprisoned not the king but the Pope, and that he is only just released. And now the Emperor, on finding the king

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. p. 199, letter lxvii., to Francesco Guicciardini, and dated Florence, 4th of April, 1526.

² Ibid., vol. iv. pp. 459-468. This report is highly praised by Major Jähns, in the essay on Machiavelli, to which we have so frequently referred.

fail him, will make propositions to which you should turn a deaf ear. We must no longer think of trusting to time and fortune, since both are deceitful. We must act. To you, it is needless to say more. '*Liberate diuturna cura Italiam. Extirpate has immanes belluas, quæ hominis præter faciem et vocem nihil habent.*'"¹

Guicciardini replied that he entirely agreed with him, and that things being now so plain, he trusted that decided measures would be taken. Yet this was not the case. Both in great things and small, the Pope was always a prey to the same uncertainty, so that even the matter of fortifying the walls of Florence could be brought to no conclusion. To the last he obstinately clung to his own impracticable project that every one else had condemned.

The new Florentine decree for the institution of the "Five Curators of the Walls," drawn up by Machiavelli himself, was approved by the Council of the Hundred on the 9th of May, 1526, and on the 18th the curators were elected, and immediately chose Machiavelli as their chancellor and *provveditore*.² Accordingly, aided by one of his sons and a third person,³ he at once began to dictate letters and give orders for the commencement of the works. The different mayors were instructed to furnish labourers for digging the trenches; a letter was sent to ask money from the Pope, since it was impossible at this juncture to impose fresh burdens on the citizens. He was also requested to hasten the arrival of Antonio da San Gallo, who had already gone to Lombardy to study the fortifications there, since it would hardly be advisable to begin new works before the engineers were agreed as to the design for the construction of the bastions.⁴ But this was the very point that could not be decided, inasmuch as the Pope still adhered to his strange idea of enlarging the circuit of

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. p. 201, letter lxxviii.

² The minute autograph of this decree is in the Florence Archives and was published in the "Opere" (P. M.), vol. vi. p. 360. There is also the register of the election of the Five *Procuratori*; but their *Atti* being missing, the date of Machiavelli's nomination is left in uncertainty. But a few official letters are still extant, contained in a packet of sixteen sheets. These letters are carried down to the 26th of February, 1527. The first eleven are in Machiavelli's handwriting, but not so the remaining thirty.

³ This other person had charge of the money and papers. "Opere," vol. viii. p. 202, letter lxxviii., dated 17th of May, 1526.

⁴ "Opere," vol. viii. p. 197, letter lxxvi. It is an official letter written to the Florentine ambassador in Rome, and is also published in vol. iv. of the same *Opere*, p. 467. See also Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xvii.

the walls, so as to include the whole of the San Miniato hill ; and pretended that the increased value of the ground thus added to the city would bring in a profit of 80,000 ducats. Machiavelli almost lost patience, and on the 2nd of June despatched three letters to Guicciardini, saying in conclusion : " this is all nonsense, and the Pope does not know what he is saying." ¹ And he hotly urged Guicciardini to overcome the Pope's obstinacy, since otherwise nothing would be done but weaken the city and waste a large sum of money. The end of it was that matters were delayed without any work of consequence being completed. When the moment came for measures of practical utility, the enemy was already so near at hand, that Machiavelli was compelled to make repeated journeys to the camp to see Guicciardini, and therefore to frequently interrupt and resume his labours.² Henceforward all that could be hoped was to find some way of turning aside from Florence the threatening storm that was rapidly drawing near, and to which no effectual resistance could be offered.

¹ " Opere," vol. viii. pp. 203-207. Letters lxx., lxxi., lxxii., of the 2nd of June, 1526.

² The Bargagli codex, so frequently quoted by us, contains a letter dated 15th of January, 1526, from the Podestà of Montespertoli to Machiavelli, *provisior murorum*, in answer to the latter's requisition for twenty-five or thirty men to work at the trenches.





CHAPTER XVII.

Attack upon Rome by the Colonna—Truce between the Pope and Emperor—Guicciardini and Machiavelli at the camp—Cremona surrenders to the League—Guicciardini receives orders to withdraw the army across the Pò—The imperial forces advance on Bologna—Unsuccessful attempt to conclude an agreement between the Pope and the Emperor—Machiavelli returns to Florence—Rioting in Florence—The sack of Rome—Expulsion of the Medici, and re-establishment of the Florentine Republic.

THE Emperor had now only to push forward his army in order to become absolute master of Italy. But he was totally penniless, and the country, although weak and divided, was entirely hostile to him. Francis I. was once more at liberty, and having decided not to observe the conditions imposed upon him, was making ready for war. For all these reasons it was of the highest importance to Charles V. to obtain the neutrality, if not the friendship, of the Pope. Cardinal Colonna, a better soldier than prelate, and the bitter enemy of Clement VII., had offered to seize his person; and the Emperor had sent Don Ugo di Moncada to Rome, commissioned first to attempt a truce, and should he fail to conclude it, to then give Colonna leave to do what he chose. In fact Don Ugo could arrange nothing, for Rome was aware of the straits to which the imperial forces were reduced. Accordingly, he indignantly departed on the 20th of June, leaving full powers to Colonna, who proceeded to act without delay. At the head of eight hundred knights, three thousand foot soldiers, and a few pieces of artillery drawn by oxen, he so quickly forced his way into the Eternal City, that Clement VII. had barely time to fly

with his Swiss guards, and take refuge in the Castle of St. Angelo. The Vatican, St. Peter's, the palaces of the cardinals were sacked, and in a few hours the spoils reached the amount of 300,000 ducats. Here was at once a fatal example given to the Imperialists on the march from Lombardy ; but the Cardinal wished to proceed to the farther extremity of laying his hands on the person of the Pontiff. In his alarm, Clement appealed to Moncada, who had re-entered Rome at the heels of the riotous invaders, and who immediately coming forward as mediator, dictated the following conditions of peace :—a four months' truce with the Emperor, the withdrawal of the Papal fleet from Genoa, of the Papal forces from Lombardy, and full amnesty to the Colonna. The Cardinal and his men withdrew to Grottaferrata, frantic with rage, and declaring that they were all betrayed ; while the Pope, on his side, accepted the forcibly imposed terms, but determined to violate them at the first opportunity. Of this Don Ugo was quite aware, but was content to gain time for the present. He therefore went to Naples, taking with him as hostage, Filippo Strozzi, a kinsman of the Medici. At the same time, the Pope had to submit to another humiliation. In order, as he alleged, to protect the rear of his army in Lombardy, he had sent a few of his people, together with a multitude of Florentine rabble, to overthrow the government of Sienna. But the Siennese put them to hasty and shameful flight before they had even attempted to strike a blow.

And, as the climax of disaster, all these different news, together with the order to retreat across the Pò, reached the Pontifical camp at the moment when, after so many reverses, there seemed to be a dawn of better luck. For until then things had gone very badly there. The Venetians, led by the Duke of Urbino, did not cross the Adda ; the expected Swiss did not arrive ; and meanwhile the army of landsknechts was increasing in Tirol, under the command of the Protestant Frundsberg, who declared his intention of going to Rome to hang the Pope, and pawned his own estates to pay the Emperor's troops. In Milan a revolt against the Spaniards had been instantly suppressed, without the allies venturing to do anything, although they might have sent twenty thousand men to support the attempt. Finally, many Swiss arrived in small detachments, without any regular contract having been made with the Cantons ; but even with these reinforcements, the Duke of Urbino refused to take the field. He

desired to have the sole command of the army, complained of everything, and decided on nothing. After making a feint of marching on Milan, in obedience to the general wish, he halted by the way, sending troops to besiege Cremona. He thus prevented the army from despatching assistance to Doria, who had blockaded Genoa, and declared that he could take the city, even were it also invested by land.

Guicciardini was the Pontifical Lieutenant in the camp, and was continually writing to Rome to animate the Pope's courage; he did his utmost to keep the army in order, to conciliate the duke and incite him to action; but all was in vain. When convinced of having persuaded that inert leader to march upon Milan, he saw him turn aside for the useless siege of Cremona. When hoping that the Pope was really dedicating his whole energies to the war, he received news of the negotiations for peace. "What a charge is mine," he then exclaimed; "how shameful it were to lose heart at the first difficulties, now, too, that the army is unbroken, that no disorders have taken place, and that we have our foot in the enemy's country."¹ This was the moment of Niccolò Machiavelli's arrival in the camp. The Florentines being consumed by anxiety for the fate of their city, had sent him to examine and report how things were going on. On the road he had received letters from Vettori giving him details of the shameful affair at Sienna. "I can believe," so wrote Vettori, "that other armies may have been put to flight by shouts, but has any one yet seen or read of an army having fled ten miles without a single pursuer? Everything is going to ruin now. When I see how ill things fare at Milan, Cremona and Genoa, how utter was the failure of the expedition to Sienna, it seems to me that with such terrible ill-luck we could not even succeed in forcing our way into an oven."²

¹ "Luogotenenza generale per il Papa Clemente VII.," part i., letter of the 31st of July, 1526, in the "Opere Inedite," vol. iv. p. 145.

² "Opere," vol. viii. pp. 207-215. Letters lxxiii. and lxxiv., written by Vettori on the 5th and 7th of August, 1526. While at the camp Machiavelli received other letters from Florence, among which, as though to prevent our forgetting his strangely contradictory character, is one from the same Jacopo Fornaciaio, who had given a performance of the "Clizia" in his own garden. This Jacopo wrote to him of the actress Barbera, concerning whom it would seem that Machiavelli was much occupied even in those days, telling him that she would write to him once a week, since he, Machiavelli, still felt so much interest in her welfare. Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xviii.

On the 10th of September Machiavelli was despatched by Guicciardini to the camp before Cremona, in order to see for himself how things were going on, and endeavour to persuade the Venetian Provveditore and the Duke of Urbino, that if they failed to take the city within five or six days, it would be better to raise the siege altogether, and march instead to the attack of Milan and the assistance of Doria at Genoa.¹ He wrote one letter from Cremona,² and then returned without delay to report that no one was inclined to abandon the siege, which really seemed to be almost at an end. In fact, shortly after this, Cremona surrendered.

Consequently the army was now free. It numbered 20,000 Italians and 13,000 Swiss, without calculating 3,500 others still expected from the Alps. The latter, however, were the regularly enlisted troops, namely, those which had to be paid, not those already in camp, many of whom daily deserted or dispersed. Nevertheless, the enemy was in inferior force and without supplies. Some blow, therefore, might at last be struck. Instead, there came the astounding news of the truce and the orders to Guicciardini to withdraw the Papal contingent across the Pò. He was thunderstruck and wrote to the Datary:³ "I would rather forsake Italy, than live in Rome in the fashion our master will have to live there, if he goes on in the way you describe. We must not yield, but resist with all our might. How can Cardinal Colonna, with only a thousand men at his heels, have the power to reduce us to so wretched a state, and almost dictate terms to the whole world?"⁴ But there was no longer any help for it, and it was necessary to submit. Giovanni dei Medici was now the only

¹ "Opere," vol. vii. p. 456; "Opere Inedite," vol. iv. p. 340, letter of the 9th September, 1526.

² "Opere Inedite," vol. iv. p. 367. Guicciardini wrote to Roberto Acciaiuoli that he had forwarded to the Pope Machiavelli's letter, "containing the plan of those entrenchments *not* drawn by the hand of Leonardo de Vinci." I used to think that this *not* was a misprint, but it also exists in the autograph. Guicciardini frequently employed the word *not*, in an affirmative sense, as the following quotations will prove: "Il castello è in pratica di accordo, e *non* ier l'altro fu a parlamento sì stretto, che si tenne per fermo doversi concludere ieri con le condizioni," &c. (Ibid., vol. ix. p. 46.) "Ma secondo gli avvisi che ho io per due persone, che l'uno partì *non* ier l'altro, l'altro ieri" (Ibid., p. 79.) And it is plain that if the plan had not been drawn by Leonardo, Guicciardini would have expressed himself differently. The design in question must have been made at an earlier period, for Leonardo was then deceased.

³ "Opere Inedite," vol. iv. pp. 393 and 397, letters of the 24th and 26th of September, 1526.

⁴ Ibid., vol. iv. p. 397, letter of the 26th of September, 1526.

general in the pay of the Pope, still remaining in the field. He was engaged to maintain a body of 4,000 foot soldiers and with secret orders to continue the war under colour of being paid by the French. But as a climax to all these ills, this valiant chief was very dissatisfied with the treatment that he had received and threatened to desert to the enemy, unless he were granted a State, according to the promises repeatedly made to him. "And he is quite capable of fulfilling his threat," said Guicciardini, in a letter from Piacenza.

As for the Duke of Urbino, he had been only too thankful to quit the camp, and instantly went home to his duchess. Meanwhile the force of landsknechts already collected at Botzen, and amounting to ten or twelve thousand men, were constantly increasing and quite prepared to descend into Italy.¹

Machiavelli then returned to Florence and wrote a report upon the state of affairs. In his judgment, a whole string of blunders had been committed, beginning with the exaggerated confidence in the Milanese revolt which had been so promptly crushed by the Imperialists. Next, they had sent too small a force to besiege Cremona, and this mistake had led to much loss of time and prestige. The Pope had been unwilling to increase his funds by the nomination of new cardinals, and yet had found it impossible to obtain money by other means. "He remained in Rome and let himself be seized as easily as a child, the which has brought things into such a tangle that no one can now unravel them, for he has even withdrawn his soldiery from the camp, and also Messer Francesco Guicciardini, who alone could cope with the infinite disorder. Now several captains are quarrelling so violently with one another that, in default of a leader, they will soon be like a pack of dogs, and consequently all affairs are terribly neglected."²

The Spanish fleet had sailed from the port of Carthagená, under the command of Lannoy, the Viceroy of Naples, in order to give battle to Doria; and by November Frundsberg had already

¹ "Opere Inedite," vol. iv., letters of the 2nd of October to Roberto Acciaiuoli and to the Datary, pp. 411 and 413; letter of the 19th of October, p. 458; letter of the 7th of November, p. 511; letter of the 9th of November, p. 520.

² This report is included in Machiavelli's printed correspondence, under the heading of "*a letter to a friend*." "Opere," vol. viii. pp. 215-219. But from its contents, its form, and from its having been found, as the editors remark, undated, unaddressed, and unsigned, among the documents of the Segreteria Vecchia of Florence, we believe it to be no private letter, but an official report.

entered the province of Brescia, with more than twelve thousand landsknechts. Nevertheless, with the aid of the French galleys, commanded by Pietro Navarro, Doria was able to repulse the enemy by sea. Nor would it have been difficult to drive the landsknechts back to their mountains, inasmuch as they were still at a distance from the main body of the imperial army, and had neither artillery, money, nor provisions. But no one molested them, although the combined forces of the Duke of Urbino and Giovanni dei Medici amounted to 1,600 horse and 19,000 foot. The Germans advanced slowly, and near Mantua were in the midst of the marshes and surrounded by hostile troops, but even then were left unassailed. All this showed that the enslavement of Italy was now inevitable. Nevertheless, so bad was the condition of the imperial forces, that in all probability they might have disbanded even without being attacked, but for the arrival of unexpected succour. The Duke of Ferrara, possessor of the finest artillery of the period, was geographically qualified to decide the fate of the war, and the Pope had committed the gross folly of offending, repulsing, and irritating him, exactly when it was of supreme importance to secure his friendship. Accordingly, he furnished the Germans with money and a few pieces of artillery, which came at the moment when they were most needed. For Giovanni dei Medici, being weary of his forced inaction, began a skirmish with his own troops alone, and made a daring onslaught upon the enemy whom he believed to be unprovided with guns. But the second shot fired by them shattered his leg so seriously that five days afterwards he was dead. And thus the Pope was deprived of his only efficient captain.

The truce was now practically at an end and the war already recommenced. Machiavelli returned in haste to the camp, to explain to the Lieutenant the wretched condition of Florence, which, unless help were given, would be totally unable to make any resistance to the enemy's attack.¹ But Guicciardini was obliged to reply that the forces of the League were so scattered, that even on an emergency it would be impossible for him to march more than six or seven thousand of the Papal infantry to the relief of the city. Accordingly the Florentines must make the best preparations in their power; and in case they might decide on attempting to conclude peace, it were better that they or the Pope should

¹ "Opere," vol. vii. pp. 459-461. "Istruzione degli Otto di Pratica a Machiavelli."

treat directly with the Viceroy, upon whom, as the representative of the Emperor, all the others depended. And after communicating this news by letter, Machiavelli instantly made his way back to Florence.¹

Meanwhile, bands of Germans and Spaniards were continually leaving Milan to join the landsknechts. The Constable de Bourbon did the same, after first using threats to Morone to extract more money from him, and then nominating him his counsellor. Thus the imperial forces had swelled to the number of 30,000, and on receiving a second supply of money and ammunition from the Duke of Ferrara, left Piacenza and set out towards Bologna. As for the Pope, he was still hesitating between peace and war. The Florentines promised him as much as 150,000 ducats, if he could succeed in concluding a fixed agreement that would deliver all Italy from the imminent danger. But although at one moment he began negotiations with the Imperialists, at the next he sent his men across the Neapolitan frontier to attack them, and then again began to arrange terms, only to violate them as soon as they were concluded. Exactly as Guicciardini had foreseen and declared, the Emperor wished to lull the Pope to sleep in order to gain time to become master of Italy. His army was slowly making its way from the north, hindered by a thousand obstacles, by want of money, by continued outbreaks of disorder in the camp and by the inclemency of the season. And before long, it would have, in this state, to force a passage through the snow drifts of the Apennines.

Guicciardini was at Parma and repeatedly wrote to say that there was no means of inducing the Duke of Urbino to attack the enemy; he was either a great traitor, or a great coward; possibly both.² In February Machiavelli came to him in great haste,³

¹ "Opere," vol. vii. p. 464; letter of the 2nd of December, from Modena, 1526.

² "Opere Inedite," vol. v. "Luogotenenza generale," part ii., letters of December, 1526, and of January and February, 1527.

³ "Opere," vol. viii. p. 231, letter from Forlì, 16th of April, 1527. In the State Archives of Modena ("Registri ducali," compartment 1) there are duplicate copies of the letters of Filippo dei Nerli, who then governed Modena for the Pope. These letters also make reference to Machiavelli, and frequently betray Nerli's scanty liking for him, whom he styled "Il Machia." On the 7th of October, 1525, Nerli wrote to Guicciardini: "Camurana, the bearer of the letter, will have supplemented it by explaining to your Lordship, that your least commands are more esteemed by me than all that may have been written by Alessandro del Caccia, especially as the latter in his letter quotes the authority of Il Machia." And on the 31st of October, 1526, he wrote to the same: "The open letter sent by your Lordship, shall be forwarded to Machiavello by the next courier that

sent for the third time from Florence, to inform him that nothing was to be hoped from negotiation ; that the city was quite unfitted to stand a siege, and earnestly begging that it might not be abandoned to the enemy.

Guicciardini led him to the duke at Casal Maggiore, to see whether their united efforts might not spur him to action. But their prayers were in vain. The Duke would neither face, nor precede the enemy ; he would only follow him at a distance.¹ There is every reason to think that he was not held back by cowardice alone, as was said and maintained by many ; but probably by secret instructions from Venice, who seemed by no means unwilling to see the Pope crushed and humiliated, instead of becoming powerful and menacing through the gain of some victories. It is certain that Guicciardini was entirely justified in writing : "Here we do naught but predict and hold for certain every possible danger to ourselves, and every possible design on the part of the enemy, who, even could he read our thoughts, would never conceive half the projects we attribute to him."² Nevertheless, Guicciardini also assured Machiavelli that should the Imperialists enter Tuscany, he would send the Papal troops on in advance, to cover Florence, even should the duke persist in remaining in the rear.³

Machiavelli sent all this news to the Eight, and repeatedly wrote from Parma, that it was impossible to divine the enemies' intentions, since they did not seem to know these themselves. It would have been very easy to put them to flight, if the confusion of the League and the inaction of the Duke of Urbino had not ruined everything. And in March he wrote from Bologna, where he was staying with Guicciardini, to say that the Imperialists were already close to the walls, had been assisted for the second time by the Duke of Ferrara, who was destined to be the arbiter of the war, and that they seemed resolved to invade Tuscany.⁴ The

passes, for, having to write myself at this time, I would not that this chatter should make the courier delay." These different letters show that Machiavelli was unweariedly travelling by day and night, sometimes alone and sometimes with an armed escort, backwards and forwards between the two hostile armies.

¹ "Opere Inedite," vol. v. p. 203, letter of the 7th of February, 1527.

² Ibid., vol. v. pp. 217 and 227, letters of the 9th and 15th of February.

³ Ibid., vol. v. p. 203, letter of the 7th of February.

⁴ Ibid., vol. vii. p. 471 and fol. These are the despatches of the third expedition to Guicciardini, which, in the "Opere," are erroneously attributed to the second.

hostile army demanded provisions and desired to enter Bologna ; but Guicciardini had only replied by closing the gates, and the Imperialists had threatened him in vain and attempted to use violent means.

The Lieutenant was now engrossed, not only by the dangerous position of the Pope, but by the still more imminent peril to the city of Florence. To induce the Duke of Urbino to give it timely succour, he had assumed the grave responsibility of ceding to him the lands of San Leo which the Florentines had always promised but never given to him.¹ But fortunately the worst danger now seemed to be averted, by the imperial troops showing signs of marching straight upon Rome. Meanwhile there was increasing disorder in their ranks. Towards the middle of March there was a positive mutiny in the camp that lasted for several days, and the Constable de Bourbon was obliged to conceal himself to escape the fury of the men. Frundsberg, on the contrary, determined to face it, and on the 16th attempted to harangue his landsknechts ; but they replied by thrusting the points of their halberds in his face, and ferociously insisting upon immediate payment. The valiant captain was so highly enraged by this indignity that he was seized with an apoplectic attack ; he sank upon a drum and fell back a corpse. But even at that moment the Duke of Urbino refused to risk an attack.

Meanwhile, news arrived from Rome that a truce had been concluded between the Viceroy and the Pope. The latter was bound to restore the property of the Colonna ; to withdraw his troops from Naples ; to relinquish that kingdom to Charles V., Milan to Sforza, and to give 60,000 ducats to the Constable de Bourbon, who would thereupon withdraw his army from the States of the Church and even from Italy, provided that France and Venice should agree to the terms. The Romans were furious, for they had already flown to arms. But the Pope, who could no longer support the enormous expenses, and was most sparing of his money, only waited for the signing of the treaty by the Viceroy on the 25th of March, and then instantly dismissed a considerable number of his soldiers in Rome, in order to save 30,000 ducats per month. Accordingly the city was left without means of defence, and the Constable, having secret orders to continue his march, at once wrote to the Viceroy that 60,000 ducats was too small a sum for his army, which refused to accept

¹ "Opere Inedite," vol. v. p. 242 and fol., letter of the 20th of February, 1527.

the truce ; and that it would be useless for him or any one else to attempt to arrest its march. In fact, on the 31st of March, he passed the river Reno near Bologna and started on his way south.

Guicciardini no longer knew either what to say, or what course to adopt ; and to increase his bewilderment, Morone now wrote to inform him, that, on instant receipt of the sum of 3,000 ducats, needed for the release of one of his sons who was held as a hostage, he was ready to betray the Imperialists, and thus throw them into the greatest confusion.¹ The Lieutenant knew his man too well to deem it worth while to send any reply. But he wrote to Rome, in a strain of the deepest melancholy, to express his conviction that it was a fatal error to think of a truce when they ought to be preparing for resistance. "I know not if necessity will at last dispel our uncertainties. Our foes demand of our Lord and of ourselves all that we possess, nor do they only assail temporal things : they likewise destroy the churches, profane the sacraments, and introduce heresies into the faith of Christ. And if these things be not considered by him who can and ought to endeavour to remedy them, I hold him guilty of the same infamy and offence against God."² Machiavelli was writing to Florence to the same effect, and after announcing that the Pope wished to make the Florentines disburse the 60,000 ducats promised by him to the Imperialists, he added : "And we must find the money and make this last attempt to save our country. If the truce be really made, the money will gain us time and at least defer our destruction, and if the truce be not concluded, then it will help us to carry on the war."³

But it was already known in Florence that Bourbon had

¹ Morone had been unable to pay the whole ransom exacted of 20,000 ducats. At the time of his release he still owed 6,000 ducats, and left his son Antonio in pledge for their payment. Later, when the imperial army was much pressed for money, he contrived to obtain 3,000 ducats more, but had to leave his son Giovanni as hostage for them. For this reason, the Constable set Antonio at liberty, and released Morone from his bond for the remaining 3,000 ducats promised by him. But his son Giovanni was still held in pledge for the sum that Morone now sought to fraudulently obtain from Guicciardini, in order, perhaps, to give it to the Imperialists. *Vide* Dandolo, "Ricordi," pp. 266, 267 ; "Opere Inedite," vol. v. p. 363, letter of the 26th of March. In the "Storia d'Italia" (vol. ix. lib. xviii. ch. i. p. 25), Guicciardini also speaks of other practices that Morone "deceitfully and fraudulently" attempted to carry on with members of the League.

² "Opere Inedite," vol. v. p. 415, letter of the 19th of April, 1527.

³ "Opere," vol. vii. p. 489, letter from Bologna, 23rd of March, 1527.

refused to accept the truce. When replying that the sum promised him was too small, he had not said how much more he should require. A messenger of his sent to the city, whither the Viceroy came expressly to meet him, made an agreement for 150,000 ducats, promising that the army should begin its retreat as soon as the first 80,000 ducats were paid. But the Constable had not yet given his formal consent to the bargain, and therefore Machiavelli wrote that it would now be better to prepare for war.¹ What terms can you hope to make with enemies, who, while still on the further side of the mountains, and with our own troops still under arms, demand 100,000 ducats of you within three days, and 50,000 more within ten? When once within reach of you they will exact all that you possess. There is no resource but resistance, and therefore it is better to resist them among the mountains than close beneath these walls.²

Although snow storms and rocks still barred the progress of the army, and there was still some talk of coming to terms, and of the ever-increasing sums necessary to obtain them, yet, having no further business in Bologna, Machiavelli set out on his return to Florence, and on the 16th of April wrote to Vettori from Forlì: "Should Bourbon pursue his march, we must decide upon war and discard all thoughts of peace. Should he remain stationary we must absolutely make peace, without thinking of war. But if driven to war, we must no longer drag our steps, but press forward with desperate haste, since frequently despair can find remedies such as were never to be found by deliberation. I bear love to Messer Francesco Guicciardini, love to my country, and I tell you on the strength of the experience earned by fifty-five years of life, that I do not think that there has ever been a harder travail than this, when peace is a necessity, yet war cannot be avoided; and when we are burdened by a prince who can neither decide wholly for peace nor wholly for war."

On the 18th, from Brisighella, he addressed another letter to the same correspondent, in a tone of still greater uncertainty, and then proceeded to Florence, where he might still be of service, and was awaited by his family with the utmost anxiety. His wife and children were in great dread of the landsknechts and Spaniards, and had already moved nearly everything from the villa. Machiavelli had promised to join them in time, in case

¹ "Opere," vol. vii. p. 496, letter from Bologna, 30th of March, 1527.

² *Ibid.*, vol. vii. p. 498, letter from Bologna, 2nd of April, 1527.

of pressing danger. On the 2nd of April, he concluded an affectionate letter from Forli, to his son Guido, with these words : "Salute Monna Marietta, and tell her that I have been almost daily on the point of setting out, and am thinking of it now, and never had so great a desire to be in Florence ; and that it is no fault of mine if I have not come. Only tell her (your mother) that no matter what news she may hear, she is to be of good cheer, for that I shall arrive before any trouble occurs."¹

His son, who was still in his boyhood, sent an answer on the 17th, saying that they were all much rejoiced by his promise. But he must be sure to warn them at once if the landsknechts were coming, so as to have time to carry everything out of the house.² This letter, traced in big and almost infantile characters, was preserved by Machiavelli, who returned to his family according to his promise.

The citizens of Florence had been prepared for every sacrifice in order to avert the danger by which they were threatened. They had quickly collected and despatched the first 80,000 ducats promised to Bourbon by the Pope ; they were melting the gold and silver plate of their churches in order to get together the remainder. But their messengers received news by the road that the terms had not even been accepted, and had barely time to rescue their precious burden and bring it back with them to Florence. Accordingly, nothing could now be thought of save means of defence. But there were very few soldiers in the city, and the fortification works, although frequently urged on by Machiavelli, could hardly be said to be really begun. The inhabitants were heartily discontented with Cardinal Passerini, who listened to no advice and did nothing. "The whole evil," wrote Guicciardini, who was also in Florence at this moment, "is caused by the ignorance of that great oaf, who concerns himself about trifles and neglects matters of importance. He will not permit others to attend to them, and can do nothing himself. He only thinks of protecting the abode of the Medici and the palace ; he neglects the government, and does not perceive what ruin he is causing. Oh God ! What pain to behold so much confusion !"³

¹ "Opere," vol. viii. p. 226, letter lxxx.

² "Carte del Machiavelli," case v. No. 21. Appendix (III.) of the Italian edition, document xix.

³ "Opere Inedite," vol. v., letter of the 26th and 29th of April, from Florence.

Guicciardini had succeeded in bringing the army of the League into the vicinity of Florence, and this had the effect of deciding the imperial forces to continue their march towards Rome. But the former army, although friendly, did not refrain from pillaging the territory, and accordingly the discontent of the Florentines was always on the increase. In fact, a quarrel occurring on the 26th of April, between a citizen and a soldier, sufficed to bring about a general disturbance, in which the people riotously clamoured for arms. It chanced at this moment that Passerini had just mounted his horse, in the company of the Cardinals Ridolfi, Cibo, and Ippolito dei Medici, in order to ride forth to meet the Duke of Urbino, who, together with the Venetian *provveditori* and the Lieutenant, had fixed his quarters at a villa a few miles from the city. Passerini, determining to show his contempt for the riot, rode on without even inquiring as to its object or gravity. This caused a rumour that the Medici and their representatives had fled from the city; accordingly the palace was invaded by a crowd shouting: "Popolo e libertà." Many influential citizens hastened to the spot; the disturbance assumed serious proportions; insulting cries were heard, and more than one dagger-blow was struck. The rioters finally proclaimed the deposition of the Medicean government and the re-establishment of the Republic. But the Cardinal, receiving timely warning of what was going on, hastened back with some of the Duke's arquebusiers; the Piazza was occupied by the soldiery; the doors of the palace were closed, and the Medicean guards, who had concealed themselves, left their hiding-places and tried to force the bolts with their pikes. Revolution and bloodshed appeared to be imminent; but the citizens shut up in the palace contented themselves with hurling a few tiles from the windows, and these fell at a distance without injuring any one. Jacopo Nardi then showed how the coping of the balustrade could be dislodged, and let some of the stones fall on the soldiers, whereupon the latter drew off.¹ Neither party much desired to fight in earnest, and rather sought to bring the affair to a speedy end. It was impossible to defend the palace without weapons, and neither was it easy to force its doors without delay. Besides, were it taken by storm, the citizens inside would certainly be killed, and this would increase the disturbance in the city. Accordingly,

¹ One of these stones fell upon Michel Angelo's David, and broke the left arm into three pieces, which were afterwards put together again.

Francesco Guicciardini, whose brother, the Gonfalonier, was shut in with the rest, and Federigo da Bozzolo at last appeared with a written promise of a general amnesty, and all ended with the election of a new Signory. Undoubtedly, had the Pope's affairs been going less badly, he would soon have wreaked a cruel revenge, but for the moment there was nothing to fear, since he was absorbed by affairs of a graver sort.¹

The imperial army had continued its march towards Rome, and as usual was followed, at a respectful distance, by that of the League. The Duke of Urbino gave the signal for departure, and marched his men through the city; and all Florence felt amazed that troops so well drilled and well armed should be incapable of facing the enemy, and only equal to laying waste the lands and pillaging the dwellings of their allies. With infinite reluctance Guicciardini, too, was compelled to accompany the grievous and shameful march. On the 8th of May, when at Castello della Pieve, he received the fatal news that the enemy, after a few hours' fight, had stormed the gates of the Eternal City, were engaged in sacking it, and that the Pope was shut up in the Castle of St. Angelo. Meanwhile the Duke of Urbino had marched against Perugia to overthrow its government, instead of pursuing the enemy. In vain the Lieutenant now did all in his power to induce him to make at least one final effort. In vain he sent despatches to Passerini urging him to send troops from Florence to attempt the Pope's liberation by means of some daring stroke. "The unhappy man is confined in the castle with no hope but in your assistance, and implores it in terms that might move stones to tears. But you do not even send him a word of reply. As I hope for God's mercy, I would rather perish than witness this great cruelty. You are so engrossed by anxiety for the palace and people of Florence, that you are oblivious of all else. Nevertheless, if the Pope be lost, your cares will go for nothing, since in losing him we lose the soul of our body."²

And soon after he wrote to say that there was nothing more to hope for any one; the Pope would come to terms of some sort with

¹ Nardi, "*Storia*," vol. ii. p. 133 and fol.; Nerli, "*Commentarii*," p. 148; Varchi, "*Storia*," vol. i. p. 130 and fol.; Guicciardini, "*Storia*," vol. ix. bk. xviii. p. 41 and fol.; "*Opere Inedite*," vol. v. p. 423 and fol.

² "*Opere Inedite*," vol. ix.; "*La prigionia di Clemente VII. e la caduta della Repubblica fiorentina*," p. 10, letter of the 18th of May, 1527.

his adversaries, and these would inevitably turn their arms against Florence.¹

The news of the taking and sack of Rome and the consequent danger of the war being carried into Tuscany, reached Florence on the 11th of May. The first thought of every one was to get rid of Cardinal Passerini, from whose rule no good was to be expected. This time there was a general disturbance, in which all the more noted citizens, including Filippo Strozzi, the kinsman of the Medici, took part. Passerini was soon convinced that there was nothing to be done, and went away with Ippolito and Alessandro dei Medici. The Republic was proclaimed on the 16th of May, and it was then hastily decided to convoke for the 20th of the same month both the Council of Eighty and the Great Council, in order to nominate, for one year only, a Gonfalonier, whose term of office might, however, be renewed. The partition walls which had been run up in the Hall of the Great Council to form chambers for the accommodation of the Medici's guards, were demolished by the scions of the noblest families of Florence, who enthusiastically set to work trundling barrows of stones and mortar.

On the 1st of June the Gonfalonier Niccolò Capponi entered office with the new Signory. The new Eight of Balìa were elected, and the Eight of *Pratica* suppressed and replaced, as in Soderini's day, by the Ten of War. Every one appeared satisfied with the restoration of liberty; but there was not a moment to spare. Instant preparations must be made for defence, inasmuch as the imperial forces, after devastating Rome, would certainly attack Florence on their way to the north. In one way or another the Pope would come to some agreement with the Emperor, and both would desire to wreak their revenge upon the resuscitated Republic. De Leyva had long promised his soldiery to let them measure the brocades of Florence with their pikes, and the whole army was voracious for spoil.

Accordingly the Florentines began to discuss the means of arming all able-bodied citizens in their country's defence, of procuring worthy captains, and of fortifying the city walls, not in accordance with the fantastic projects of the Pope, but after the plans of competent persons. And before long the design sent by Michel Angelo Buonarroti arrived, "and even won the praise and

¹ "Opere Inedite," vol. ix.; letters of the 21st and 26th of May, 1527.

approval of military men." ¹ The ardour of the citizens grew hotter from day to day ; it was plain that, at last, they were really nerved to desperate efforts. All this, however, was the prologue to a fresh drama, with which we have here no concern ; the siege and heroic defence of Florence being outside the limits of the present history.

¹ Nardi, "Storia di Firenze," vol. ii. p. 161.





CHAPTER XVIII.

Machiavelli is sent to the camp near Rome—His return to Florence—Fresh calamities and new sorrows—His illness and death—His will—A dream attributed to Machiavelli.



HERE now was Machiavelli, the *provisor muros*, who, although with scanty success, had so strenuously laboured to fortify the walls of his native city, and in the endeavour to save it from attack and pillage by the imperial forces, had made so many journeys through Italy? During the first week in May, he had been sent with Francesco Bandini on a mission to Guicciardini, who was now within the Papal territories, and continually drawing nearer to Rome, in the vain hope of at least securing the personal safety of the Pope. The Florentine envoys were commissioned to investigate the state of affairs, and ask, in the name of Passerini and of the government, whether something could not be done to assist his Holiness. But, in truth, Florence had neither the wish nor the power to do anything. Guicciardini at once sent the envoys to Civita Vecchia, where Andrea Doria, the admiral of the Papal fleet, was then to be found, to inquire concerning his plans for the deliverance of the Pope. They were also to beg him to succour the army by at least sending the promised stores, since the soldiers were starving and threatening to disband from one moment to another. On the 22nd of May, Machiavelli and Bandini wrote that Doria could neither employ his vessels in the transport of provisions nor for any other use, being obliged to keep them in readiness for the Pope, who might need them at any moment,

should he succeed in escaping from the castle. Therefore the admiral only placed a brigantine and a galley at their disposal; but these they might use for any purpose, and even for their conveyance back to Leghorn. He approved the idea of the sudden attack planned by Guicciardini for the release of the Pope, but seemed to have but little hope of its success.¹ And this is the last letter penned by Machiavelli that remains to us. In consequence of the revolution and change of government in Florence, he could no longer act in an official capacity. He hastened, therefore, to return to his native city, whither Guicciardini was soon to follow him.

These two great Italians were now in a most difficult position. Guicciardini, the adversary of popular government, and connected by indissoluble ties with the destinies of the Pope and the Medici, whom he had served with fidelity and intelligence, found Florence in the power of his enemies, was speedily obliged to withdraw into voluntary exile, and deemed himself fortunate to escape the confiscation of his property. But unhappy as was his situation it had at least the advantage of being well-defined and decisive. He could do nothing but hope and await the return of the Medici, through whom alone could his fortunes be re-established. Machiavelli, on the contrary, found himself in a very different and far worse position. Although a sincere republican, he had first fallen into disgrace upon the overthrow of liberty. After many misfortunes and severe embarrassments, he had at last obtained some insignificant employment from the Medici at the moment when their own fate was identified with the general desire to save the country from foreign devastation. To this end he had laboured with almost youthful vigour, had expended all the activity and energy of his last years, although now nearly sixty years of age and with very broken health. By day and by night, in winter frosts and summer heats, in danger from hostile troops and exposed to numerous other risks, he had never granted himself any rest. Now, all at once, on his return to Florence, he involuntarily but inevitably appeared in the light of a foe to the freedom that he had so passionately worshipped, and of the independence of the city to which he had devoted his best strength. For he returned there as the servant of tyrants who had just been expelled. What, then, could he hope?

Accordingly it cannot astonish us to learn from the accounts

¹ "*Opere*," vol. vii. p. 509.

in Busini's letters, that Machiavelli was often heard to sigh very bitterly when returning to Florence with Pietro Carnesecchi and the latter's sister.¹ Certainly, however, his sighs were not caused, as Busini ill-naturedly supposes, by regret for the revival of freedom, but, on the contrary, by grief that he should be naturally regarded as its opponent. Now was the moment to strengthen the fortifications, arm the inhabitants, and encourage them by means of free institutions to heroic self-sacrifice in the defence of their country. These were the very things Machiavelli had always preached, always desired, always hoped to accomplish; yet he was now held excluded from them, and considered as their opponent.

In fact, the moment he arrived, he found that while all were engaged in reconstituting the Republic and preparing for its defence, no one referred to him; but that all, on the contrary, either distrusted or avoided him. The friends of the Medici went either into exile or hiding; and those who had managed to desert their party in time and were thought to be ardent supporters of the new government, could not be expected to remember Machiavelli, who had no aptitude for playing the tribune nor for ostentatiously changing his livery and course of action. All this was deeply afflicting to him; and an acuter pang was added on receiving a positive proof of that which he had foreseen. On the 10th of June, the Eight of *Pratica* being abolished and the Ten of War reconstituted, Michelozzi was dismissed from the secretaryship and another was to be named in his place. Machiavelli had filled that post most honourably in Soderini's time; he had recently superintended the fortifications of the walls while holding a similar office, it was therefore natural to hope that he might now be called upon to fill it again. But by a decree of the 10th of June, a certain Francesco Tarugi was nominated to the vacant Secretaryship of the Ten, without any one seeming to retain the least remembrance of the former colleague of Marcello and Soderini.² This finally convinced him that his career was at an end. To be prohibited from serving his country, from serving the cause of

¹ Busini, "Lettere," pp. 84, 85, letter ix.

² *Vide* appendix to the Italian edition, document xx. This proves that Donato Giannotti was only named secretary in October, 1527, that is after Tarugi and Machiavelli were both deceased, and shows, therefore, that there was no truth in the rumour of Machiavelli having died of grief on finding Giannotti elected in his stead.

liberty that he had so ardently loved and for which he had suffered so much, was a blow that Niccolò Machiavelli could not survive.

Whether this disappointment was the only immediate cause of his death, cannot be ascertained. He had a long-standing disorder of the digestive organs, but it is certain that on the 20th of June, a few days after the nomination of Tarugi, he fell seriously ill. He took his accustomed remedy, but this time it failed to give relief; he was seized with violent spasms of the stomach, and his last hour rapidly approached. Wife, children, and friends were gathered round his bed. On the 22nd of June he expired. "He consented to confess his sins to Frà Matteo, who stayed with him to the end." So wrote his son Piero in a letter to a friend, concluding the brief account with the words: "as you know, he has left us in the utmost poverty."¹ We need not be surprised that Machiavelli should have consented to see a confessor, notwithstanding his many diatribes against popes, priests, and friars. It was a common practice of the time. Besides, although he had frequently inveighed against the corruption of the clergy, and the evils wrought upon Italy by the Church, he had never attacked the dogmas of the faith, and never indeed discussed them.

In 1522, Machiavelli made a second will,² constituting his four sons, Bernardo, Lodovico, Guido, and Piero his heirs; to his daughter Bartolommea, or Baccia, afterwards married to Giovanni, father of Giuliano dei Ricci, he left, according to custom, nothing save her maintenance, to which indeed she was legally entitled. We are ignorant whether he had succeeded in securing her a small dowry in the *Monte delle Fanciulle*, although his intention of so doing is mentioned in the will. His wife, Marietta, was referred to in terms of sincere and unaltered affection, and named executrix and guardian to his younger children.

But notwithstanding his Christian death and the love manifested by him to the last towards his wife and family, all sorts of stories of various degrees of malignity were naturally circulated by the detractors of Machiavelli, who did not respect even his dying moments. Giovio stated in his "Elogia" that Machiavelli had died with a jest on his lips, and from an overdose of the medicine that he thought a specific for every complaint. Busini, too, who had always been hostile to him, said in writing to Varchi in 1549,

¹ The letter is not dated and is addressed to Francesco Nelli, Professor at Pisa, and a kinsman of Machiavelli. It is in the "Opere," vol. i. p. cxxix.

² Both wills are included in the "Opere," vol. i. pp. 133-138 and 139-144.

that Machiavelli had died partly from natural causes, and partly from grief at the election of Donato Giannotti to an office he coveted for himself. This, as we have already seen, was totally untrue. He also added that, on falling ill, Machiavelli instantly took his usual pills and finding himself grow rapidly worse, "told his famous dream to Filippo (Strozzi), Francesco del Nero, Jacopo Nardi and others, and then reluctantly died, cutting jokes to the last."¹ Busini, however, does not say in what this celebrated dream consisted, nor do we find any mention of it in contemporary writers. Ricci, after severely censuring the terms in which Giovio seemed to allude to profane jests upon religious subjects uttered by Machiavelli in his last moments, declared the whole account to be false and calumnious. He likewise added that the medicine used by his grandfather was very mild, and that Machiavelli had died the death of a Christian, surrounded by his family and friends. Neither Marietta nor any of the children, including Baccia, the mother of Ricci, had ever made the least allusion to these false reports.²

After all, there was nothing extraordinary in the fact of his death. He was advanced in years; had been recently exposed to many hardships, travelling by night and day in all weathers. He had returned to Florence, after crossing the Roman Campagna on the way, at a season when the climate begins to be very dangerous; he had long been agitated by continual mental suffering, which had been greatly aggravated of late. All this was more than sufficient to account for his death, without requiring any special explanation, and it is impossible to suppose that he could have had any disposition to jest in the presence of his confessor and of the wife and children whom he was leaving for ever.

Nevertheless, the dream unknown to those who attended his deathbed, was actually related by an after generation. According to their account, Machiavelli beheld in his sleep a crowd of famished and miserable people. On asking who they were he was told: the blessed souls in Paradise. Hardly had they vanished from his view than he saw instead a throng of grave-visaged men discussing political matters, and distinguished among them many illustrious philosophers of Greece and Rome. These were the souls condemned to eternal punishment. Being asked in which company he preferred to remain, he instantly replied:

¹ Busini, "Lettere," letter ix. pp. 84, 85.

² *Vide* the Ricci Codex, p. 193.

I would rather be in Hell and converse with great minds upon State questions, than live in Paradise with the rabble I saw just now. It is hard to decide who could have been the first to relate this dream. Bayle gives a long account of it in his Dictionary, but only quotes authors of a date long posterior to Machiavelli's time, and among them Binet the Jesuit.¹ Nevertheless, Busini's words show us that there had been already much talk of the pretended dream, although as yet of only a vague and indefinite kind. Rather than a dream, it seems to us to be a sufficiently exact parody of Machiavelli's pagan spirit. As an instance, we may quote a speech from the beginning of the fourth act of "*La Mandragola*," where Callimaco, despairing of the success of his illicit love, says to himself: "On the other hand the worst that can befall thee, is to die and go to hell. Many others have died before thee, and many worthy men are in hell. Why, then, shouldst thou be ashamed to go there in thy turn?" These expressions, and many others of the same kind in the "*Storie*" and the "*Discorsi*," especially wherever comparisons are drawn between Pagan creeds and Christianity, might have given origin to this fictitious dream. Nor is it impossible that in happier times Machiavelli himself may have related it as a joke, but we cannot suppose that he would have done so in the hour of his death. It is certain that Francesco Ottomano, the oldest authority cited by Bayle, wrote concerning this dream in 1580, but merely saying that he had read in another author how Machiavelli had declared in a certain part of his works that, when he died,

¹ Stephen Binet, of Dijon (1569-1639). At p. 359 of his work, "*Du Salut d'Origène*," he relates the dream, without giving any authority for it. These are his words: "On arrive a ce détestable point d'honneur, où arriva Machiavel sur la fin de sa vie: car il eut cetté illusion peu devant que rendre son esprit. Il vit un tas de pauvres gens, comme coquins, deschirez, affamez, contrefaits, fort mal en ordre et en très petit nombre; on luy dit que c'estoit ceux de Paradis, desquels il estoit écrit: *Beati pauperes, quoniam ipsorum est regnum celorum*. Ceux-ci estans retirez, on fit paroistre un nombre innombrable de personnages pleins de gravité et de majesté: on les voyoit comme un Sénat, où on traitoit d'affaires d'Estat, et fort serieuses: il entrevit Platon, Seneque, Plutarque, Tacite, et d'autres de cetté qualité. Il demanda qui estoient ces Messieurs là si venerables; on luy dit que c'estoient les damnés, et que c'estoient des ames reprouvées du Ciel. *Sapientia hujus saculi inimica est Dei*. Celà estant passé, on luy demanda desquels il vouloit estre. Il respondit qu'il aimait beaucoup mieux estre en Enfer avec ces grands esprits, pour déviser avec eux des affaires d'Estat, que d'estre avec cette vermine de ces belistres qu'on luy avoit fait voir. Et à tant il mourut, et alla voir comme vont les affaires d'Estat de l'autre monde."

he would rather go to Hell than to Paradise. For in the latter he would meet no one but wretched monks and apostles, whereas in Hell he would be in the company of cardinals, popes, princes, and kings.¹ This would tend to prove that the dream was invented by Machiavelli's adversaries, in order to censure certain opinions of his held to be unchristian.

Machiavelli's remains were laid in Santa Croce, in the private family chapel.² In course of time this chapel was given up to a religious confraternity, that erected an altar in it and buried all their brethren there indiscriminately, without any one raising objections to the proceeding.³ The family soon became extinct, for of all Machiavelli's sons Bernardo alone left any male issue, one of whom, Niccolò, became a canon, and the other, Alessandro, died in 1597,⁴ leaving a female child aged nine, of the name of

¹ "Wolphius, nuper Augustæ mortuus, in suis 'Commentariis in Tusculanas,' quos anno superiore mihi donavit, Machiavellum scelerum, impietatum et flagitiorum omnium magistrum appellat, ac testatur illum, quodam loco scripsisse: sibi multo optabilius esse post mortem ad inferos et diabolos detrudi quam in coelum ascendere. Nam hic nullos reperturum nisi mendiculos et misellos quosdam monachos, heremitas, apostolos; illic victurum se cum cardinalibus, cum papis, regibus, et principibus" (Epistola Francisci Hotomani, 28 dec. 1580, No. 99. Francisci et Joannis Hotomanorum, "Epistolæ," Amstelodami, 1700).

See likewise Baldelli in his "Elogio" of Machiavelli, note 16. We have failed to discover the work of Wolphius, quoted by Ottomano, and do not know whether it has been printed or not.

² In the "Libro dei Morti," from 1457 to 1501, No. 6, a. c. 288r. In the register of the year 1500 we find this entry: "Messer Bernardo Machiavelli, buried in Santa Croce on the said day (10th May, 1500)." And in the "Libro dei Becchini," No. 10, a. c. 128, under the date of the 22nd of June, 1527: "Niccolò di . . . Machiavelli, buried in Santa Croce on the 22nd." Both these books are in the Florence Archives. The same entry is given in the "Libro dei Morti," No. 9.

³ Ricci mentions this in his "Priorista" (Quartiere S. Spirito, 16c). He says that the chapel was in the side of the "wall turned to the north, near the so-called door of the Guardi;" and tells how a monk of the Santa Croce church went to the Canon Niccolò, son of Bernardo di Niccolò Machiavelli, and informed him that many persons not connected with the family were now buried all together in the Machiavelli chapel, and that this seemed to him to be an unlawful abuse; and that it would be right to put a stop to it, and to restore the chapel. But the canon replied: "Oh, let them continue to do so, for my father was fond of society, and the more dead he has in his company, the better he will be pleased."

⁴ In the "Priorista," Ricci, Quartiere S. Spirito, at c. 273r, it is noted that in 1581, Bernardo, son of Niccolò, son of Bernardo Machiavelli, "was more than seventy years of age, and indeed close upon eighty." The Canon Niccolò, son of this Bernardo, died of erysipelas on the 10th of June, 1597, and his brother Alessandro died in 1597, leaving a daughter of nine years named Ippolita. And thus

Ippolita, who married one of the Ricci family. The Machiavelli chapel then fell into still greater decay, so that its precise situation was no longer remembered. For reasons, elsewhere explained by us in detail, the name of Machiavelli was at last held in abhorrence by his own fellow-citizens. His fame, however, began to extend in the eighteenth century, as is evidenced by the numerous editions of his works, given almost simultaneously to the world.¹ In 1760, several of his unpublished compositions were printed at Lucca, and in 1767 the Preposto Ferdinando Fossi published a volume of his "*Legazioni*" never before edited. At last, in 1782, the large edition of his complete works in six quarto volumes was issued,² and, considering its date, was a worthy monument to the great Italian. It was dedicated to Lord Cowper,³ who in conjunction with the Grand Duke, Pietro Leopoldo, had given material assistance towards its completion. This English nobleman was almost a citizen of Florence, where he proved a zealous patron of scholarship, and an ardent admirer of Machiavelli. In 1787, again in co-operation with the Grand Duke, he became an active and generous promoter of the plan started by Alberto

the family became extinct. In the same year died Lorenzino, son of Lorenzo di Ristoro Machiavelli. With him another branch of the family came to an end. The third and last became extinct at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

¹ The Hague, 1726; London (Paris), 1768; Venice, 1769; London, 1772.

² This edition is preceded by a learned preface from the pen of Reginaldo Tanzini. The editors had not been allowed to avail themselves of the Strozzi library, containing many other of Machiavelli's autographs. Soon after, however, that branch of the Strozzi became extinct, and the Grand Duke purchased the most precious manuscripts of the family library. Then in the Barberini Library in Rome a Codex was discovered, containing more of Machiavelli's inedited writings. Accordingly, in 1796 a second edition of the "*Opere*" was begun in eight volumes, intended to comprise many "*Legazioni*" and letters never before published. It was, however, incomplete, for it included neither the diplomatic nor private correspondence, and was compiled with so much haste that in the second book of the "*Discorsi*" there is a gap in the text from the middle of chap. xxx. to the end of chap. xxxiii. See the preface by Francesco Tassi to the edition of the "*Opere*," Italy, 1813 (Florence, 1826).

³ George Nassau Clavering, third Earl Cowper, born in 1738, established himself in Florence in his youth, and in 1775 married Miss Anna Gore, daughter of a Lincolnshire gentleman, and a great favourite of the Grand Duke. With the exception of Sir Horace Mann, Lord Cowper was the most popular Englishman in Florence. In 1768 he was elected member of the Della Cruscan Academy. He returned the affection shown to him by the Florentines, and was a generous promoter of every design for the embellishment of the city. *Vide* Reumont, "*Geschichte Toscana's*," Gotha, "*Perthes*," 1876-7, vol. ii. pp. 360, 361.

Rimbotti for a public subscription towards the erection of a monument to Machiavelli in Santa Croce. Innocenzo Spinazzi, a sculptor of relative merit during that period of artistic decadence, was charged with the work, and Doctor Ferroni added to it the simple but eloquent description :

TANTO NOMINI NULLUM PAR ELOGIUM
NICOLAUS MACHIAVELLI,
Obit Anno A. P. V.¹ MDXXVII.

¹ *A partu Virginis*, although, according to the Florentine style, the year began *ab incarnatione*.





CONCLUSION.



ACHIARELLI, as we have seen, was very closely connected with his times. Therefore our estimate of him must greatly depend upon our estimate of the age in which he lived. He came into the world at a moment when political corruption was general throughout Europe, but more predominant in Italy than elsewhere on account of the greater number of persons taking part in public life. Hence the evil effects of this corruption infected every section of society in our country. Our culture enhanced the criminality of the vices and misdeeds of a statecraft no longer ruled by the blind and ungoverned passions of the Middle Ages, but the product of refined calculation and cunning, full of cruelty and devoid of scruples. With us, mediæval institutions rapidly fell into decay, leaving individual members of the community deprived of all guidance save that of their own instincts. In France, England, and Spain, feudalism still served as a basis for the sovereign power of those three great monarchies. But, possessed of more stable traditions, they were compelled to pursue a policy that, while no less corrupt as regarded its means, was necessarily more national in its aims.

Nevertheless, Italian corruption has assumed exaggerated proportions in the eyes of posterity. It has been forgotten that this corruption mainly prevailed among the upper classes of society, the statesmen and *litterati* upon whom the attention of historians is almost exclusively fixed. Among the lower classes virtue and morality still remained more firmly rooted. This we find to be conclusively proved by the evidence of popular literature, familiar



MONUMENT TO MACHIABELLI.

(After a photograph of the original in the National Museum of Florence.)

correspondence, and the lives of a vast number of obscure individuals. In many parts of Italy the population was far more cultured and gentle than beyond the Alps, and committed fewer crimes. Besides, although other nations had the greatest mistrust for Italian politicians, and carefully stood on their guard against them, they showed no want of confidence in our merchants or bankers; and many foreigners admitted Italian physicians, secretaries and preceptors into their households.

To this moral divergence between two sections of our society was added—at least among the upper classes—a contradictory conception of life itself. All private relations were ruled by Christian morality, or at all events professed unquestioning adherence to its precepts; but it was forsaken in public life, where it was supposed to have no practical value. Good faith, loyalty, and Christian goodness would have subjected to certain destruction any prince or government that should have actually obeyed their dictates in political matters. The state would have certainly fallen a prey to the enemy; would perhaps have dissolved into anarchy. This contradiction was patent to all; but no one dared to investigate its causes, or thought of overcoming it. The human conscience was, as it were, at war with itself, through being dragged in two opposite directions. And the one road led to Heaven, the other to Hell. So the human conscience was sometimes driven to decide “that it was better to love your country than your soul.”

A similar state of things had serious consequences with regard to life and to literature. Scepticism invaded men's souls; the religious sentiment was weakened; it was attempted to study the world and realities as they actually were, apart from all else. A disproportionate admiration for the ancients arose, precisely because the ancients led men back to reality, to nature, and not only recognized the exigencies of statecraft, but exalted to heaven all who submitted to them for the safety and prosperity of their country. Literature, too, devoted itself to the study of nature, form and material beauty, and sought to become pagan in the midst of a Christian society. The ancient forms, however, became gradually inspired with a new spirit, and gave birth to the art of the Renaissance which was a purely Italian creation, and almost a first preliminary of peace between Paganism and Christianity, mind and nature, heaven and earth. But in practical life it was less easy to establish a similar reconciliation. No inconsiderable portion of

literature itself, romance and comedy above all, reflects the internal chaos that was bewildering the Italian intellect. The national mind was going through a hard struggle in the midst of a political, social, and intellectual transformation. It was seeking the basis of a natural and rational scheme of morals, that, while respecting the historic necessities of life, should be in no contradiction with revealed morality; it craved independence of reason and conscience, without the destroyal of the sanctity of faith. And while Italy was writhing in this struggle, when already, through her own intrinsic strength, a new light was dawning in the horizon, all Europe fell upon her, stifled and then reviled her for leaving to others the completion of her own special work.

Without having extensive culture, Machiavelli early learnt to prize Pagan antiquity more highly than all else, and had a particular admiration for the Romans. His mind was formed by their history and their literature. Nature had gifted him with an extraordinarily limpid and acute intelligence; with an exquisite taste for elegance of form; with a most lively fancy, which although insufficient to make him a poet, influenced him continually; with a mordant and satiric spirit discerning the comic side of human events, and giving added force to the pungent wit of the sarcastic sallies that gained him so many enemies and detractors. For he had a kindly nature, and cannot be charged with a single bad action. His manners were certainly loose, but less so than might be imagined from the very licentious language which, according to the custom of the day, he adopted in his letters and his plays. Towards his wife and children he showed unvarying affection to the last hour of his existence. But Machiavelli's real life was all in his intellect: therein lay the true source of his greatness. His predominating mental gift, and that in which he outstripped all his contemporaries, was a singular power of piercing to the innermost kernel of historic and social facts. He was no patient investigator of minute historical details, nor had he the speculative genius required to dwell upon metaphysical and abstract considerations touching the nature of man. But he was unequalled in exploring and bringing to light the first origin and special result of any political revolution or social transformation. He was unequalled in discerning the qualities determining the nature of a people or a state. Nor could any one rival him in the power of indicating what was the character in any given society, not so much of this or that sovereign in particular, as of the sovereign,

captain, aristocracy or people in general. It was in these things that all the mighty originality of his intelligence was shown.

And it was this predominant faculty that gave him so irresistible a vocation for a life devoted to public affairs. Not that it was a career leading him to wealth, since, despite his great aptitude for business, he was not possessed in any exceptional degree of that practical intuition of individual character conferring the instinctive power of guiding and mastering men. In this gift he was surpassed by many of his contemporaries, and notably by Guicciardini. Nevertheless, Machiavelli found in public affairs a wide field for the exercise of his observant faculty, and for his feverish activity of mind, and was accordingly passionately devoted to them. On first assuming the Secretaryship of the Republic he was merely an excellent official servant. But his assiduity in his duties, his aptitude for planning and originating new designs, gained him the confidence of Soderini, who speedily began to employ him in matters of greater moment.

The circumstance that decided once for all the direction of his future studies, set him on the road for which he was naturally predestined, and formed the commencement of his true political training, was his mission to the court of the Duke of Valentinois. He then perceived how an adventurer of the worst type, and capable of the most iniquitous actions, might yet have grand qualities as a statesman and general. By a course of bloodshed and treason the duke actually succeeded in extirpating the most abominable tyrants of Romagna. He founded a government that re-established order, tranquillity, and prompt administration of justice among the hardy inhabitants of that province, who once delivered from oppression, began to prosper, and conceived a lively affection for their new ruler. Had he been a kinder, or less corrupt man, had he shown any hesitation, his mercy, so Machiavelli thought, would have been cruel. The figure of Cæsar Borgia rose before his eyes as the living personification of the moral contrast afflicting the age, and helped him to explain the enigma. He clearly saw that statecraft has ways and means of its own, which are not the ways and means of private morality; that, on the contrary, the morality of private life may sometimes check a statesman in mid-career and render him vacillating, without his being either a good or a bad man; and that it is mainly vacillation of this kind that leads to the downfall of States. There must be no vacillation, he said, but a daring adoption of the measures demanded

by the nature of events. Such measures will always be justified, when the end is obtained. And the end in view must be the welfare of the State. He who achieves this, even if a wicked man, may be condemned for his wickedness, but will deserve, as a prince, everlasting glory. If, on the contrary, he should cause the ruin of the State, whether through private ambition, or from hesitation born of a good motive, he will be consigned to infamy as a wicked or incapable prince, even when, as a private individual, deserving the highest praise. Such is the true meaning of Machiavelli's maxim : that the end justifies the means.

He adhered to these ideas during the whole of his life, and they formed the basis upon which his political doctrines were built up. But the pressure of affairs left him no time to excogitate or transcribe them after his return to Florence. His missions to the French king and to the emperor gave him opportunities for investigating the general organization of France and Germany, and for writing admirable descriptions of all that he had noted. It was then, too, that he learned to recognize the immense advantages accruing to the national strength and general well-being by the formation of a great State. Besides this, the examination he was enabled to make of the military institutions of various countries, particularly of Switzerland and Germany ; his experience of the siege of Pisa, and the historic examples of Greece and Rome, taught him distrust of mercenary troops and armies of adventure, and awoke in his mind the ideal conception of an armed and free people. This was the origin of his scheme of a Militia Ordinance, for which he made so many studies, and vainly expended so huge an amount of labour. But all these ideas gradually forming in his mind were still in a fragmentary state. It was impossible for him to give them any systematic arrangement, while obliged to travel continually, both within and without the territories of the Republic, and to write quantities of official letters which were often of very trifling importance. He occasionally composed a few verses, sketched a few comedies ; but these pleasant labours were always interrupted, and only served as passing amusements. But he still pursued his observations, and continually added to them, especially when the Republic was struggling through the difficult crises and dangers occasionally threatening its existence. He served the government to the last with great fidelity and disinterestedness, and did all in his power to prevent its fall, which could not, however, be averted. After


fourteen years of unremitting labour, after undertaking many diplomatic missions, after handling large sums of money for the organization of the militia and the expenses of the war, he was still as poor as at the outset of his career.

The fall of the Republic was a personal misfortune, inasmuch as it deprived him of office, drove him from public affairs, and plunged him in the greatest financial difficulties ; nevertheless, it proved a blessing in disguise, since it forced him to think and to write, and won him immortality. Had he always preserved his secretaryship, we should have had nothing from his pen excepting the "*Legazioni*." But on being condemned to private life, his ideas began to assume shape and order ; his mental horizon to widen. The Medici, being all-powerful in Rome and Florence, it was impossible at that time to hope for the revival of popular government, and he therefore began to meditate on the constitution of a strong Italian State. He thus invented his political system, which has a double character. On the one hand, he gives us a new science of Statesmanship ; on the other, he continually applies this science to the Italy of his own day, and seeks practical methods of erecting her into a nation, and putting her on the road to real greatness. This duplex conception was expounded in the "*Prince*," the "*Discourses*," and the "*Art of War*," and is more or less evident throughout all Machiavelli's works. Equally duplex, too, is the basis of his system, for it is founded upon experience and the lessons of history, the latter being nearly always brought in to support the conclusions of the former.

In the "*Histories*" we find Machiavelli inspired by the same Republican spirit by which we have beheld him dominated amid the whirl of affairs, and to which he was unceasingly faithful. In penning his "*Histories*" he thought to have discovered that all great political events were the invariable product of the will and intelligent daring of some great man. He became convinced that the ruin of Italy was the direct result of her divisions and of the foreign invasions principally caused by Papal greed.

Our Italian motherland, he said in conclusion, can never be prosperous nor great until it is united, and its unity can only be the work of a Prince-reformer. This prince always appeared to him in the likeness of Cæsar Borgia, as a strong and intelligent will, capable of organizing and disorganizing, making and unmaking nations at his own pleasure. This incarnated will-power

is almost a natural force, foregoing all personal characteristics, all individual and moral value ; it becomes one with its deeds, by which, and by the end accomplished is it alone to be judged. And only to a solitary directing will is it given to establish and organize the State. The people may be able to preserve and develop it, to ensure its prosperity, but can never be its creator.

 In this strain the "Prince" was conceived and written. It lays before us the constitution and organization of a State by the work of the man who is its living personification, but in whom the individual and private conscience is, as it were, eradicated. The prince must override every obstacle to the accomplishment of his great purpose ; must be checked by no scruples. It was in this way that the mind of Machiavelli gradually wrought out his conception of the organic unity of the State, and it was in the same way that the modern State afterwards took shape in real history. This demonstrates the great value of his conception, and explains the singular fascination it has exercised, all calumnies notwithstanding, upon the minds of thinkers and politicians. It was the scientific character of the work that led the author to examine with equal indifference both the virtuous and the wicked prince, and offer to either the counsels suited to the achievement of his end. These counsels are the outcome of earnest study of actual events, of ancient and modern history, without any reference to moral considerations. The *case of conscience*, so unavoidably present to our own minds, never seems to occur to that of Machiavelli, who is solely concerned in enquiring which is the road to power, and how the State is to be established ? He never puts himself the question : whether the excessive immorality of the means employed, may not, even while momentarily grasping the desired end, sap the very foundations of society, and render in the long run all good and strong government an impossibility. He forgets to inquire whether, just as there is a private morality, there may not be also a social and political morality, imposing certain inviolable limits, and furnishing rules for the statesman's conduct, which, although varying with the times and different social conditions, are yet equally subject to righteous principles. This is the weak and fallacious side of his doctrine ; that which disgusts us with its author, arouses our horror, and has been a perennial source of accusation and calumny.

But when, on completing his analysis, and cruel labour of

vivisection, Machiavelli proceeds to draw his conclusions, then at last the practical side and real aim of his work are clearly seen. It is a question of achieving the unity of his Italian motherland and of delivering it from foreign rule. This was certainly the holiest of objects; but Machiavelli well knew that in the conditions in which Italy and Europe were then involved it would be impossible to achieve that object without recurring to the immoral means practised by the statesmen of the time. Pursued by this idea, and dominated by his theme, Machiavelli did not pause to disentangle the scientific, general and permanent aim of his book from the practical aim and transitory means, apparently and, it may be, really essential to its achievement at that moment. It is needful, he said in conclusion, to dare all things, and in view of the grandeur and sacredness of the end, to yield to no scruples. Solely by the formation of a united, powerful, and independent nation can Italy acquire liberty, virtue, and true morality. This is an enterprise only to be undertaken by a Prince-reformer, and by the means suggested and imposed by history and experience. The people must afterwards complete and consolidate it by liberty, by national arms, by public and private virtue.

It is this second idea that forms the special theme of the "Discourses." They start from the same conception as that of the "Prince": some one man must be the founder of the State, and go forward relentlessly to his end. They then proceed to show how the people should possess itself of the government, render it strong and prosperous, and administer it by means of free institutions and morality. And here, with an inexhaustible fund of just, profound, and practical observations, the author lays the basis of a new science of statesmanship. We must, however, confine ourselves to remarking that the whole literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries contains no other pages in any way comparable with those of the "Discourses" in praise of the love of liberty, patriotic devotion and the sacrifice of all private interest to the public good. For there, as in the exhortation at the close of the "Prince," Machiavelli's patriotism is vented with an eloquence bordering upon sublimity. At such moments his character gains elevation in our eyes, his figure assumes heroic proportions, and still more so when we remember that this patriotism not only inspired his intellect, but guided the conduct of his entire life.

To have freedom, the people must also have strength, and

therefore Machiavelli was led to write his "Art of War." This work shows that, during the Pisan war, and throughout his various travels, he must have devoted much inquiry to the organization of foreign armies, for the sole purpose of discovering a means of regenerating the Italian arms, and was thus enabled to arrive at thoroughly original conclusions. For these studies not only led to the conception of his "Ordinanza," of the armed nation, but likewise caused him to recognize and proclaim that the genuine strength of armies, as of nations, consists in virtue. Without virtue, he concluded, a people can neither be strong nor free; can never accomplish anything great. The training of Italians to arms, to constant readiness to give their lives and their all for their country, can alone constitute the real beginning of their regeneration. And where, we may once more repeat, are other writings to be found extolling virtue with the heat or earnestness so nobly and eloquently poured forth in the "Art of War"?

Nor were these praises mere empty rhetoric. The best years of Machiavelli's life, his whole stock of energy and persistent, irrepressible activity, were dedicated to realizing the ideas expounded in this work. It is impossible not to grant him our admiration when we find him preaching the necessity of arming the people, training it to self-sacrifice for its country's cause, and ceaselessly endeavouring to impress Soderini and the Republic of Florence with the same conviction. Nor was he content with this alone. We find him in his days of misfortune and persecution at the hands of the Medici, recommencing the same propaganda among the youthful band of the Oricellarii Gardens. Again later, when of advanced age and shaken health, we see him, forgetful of himself and his own private interests, endeavouring to convert even Clement VII. to his ideas. And his promptitude in offering to be the first initiator of the noble attempt, at the terrible time when the hosts of Charles V. were already advancing to overwhelm Italy in ruin, actually infused a momentary spark of enthusiasm into the Pope's uncertain soul. We are then forced to acknowledge that Machiavelli had at least one great and heroic passion redeeming, elevating and raising him above all his contemporaries: an ardent and irresistible love for liberty, his country, and even for virtue. And in remembering this, the brows of him who has been so persistently stigmatized as the incarnation of evil and moral darkness, become suddenly crowned with a divine splendour that glorifies the age.

This, then, was the process followed by Machiavelli's mind throughout his various works. Taken one by one, their unity fails to strike us, their aim is lost sight of, and they give occasion for the strangest misinterpretations and calumnies. Taken as a whole, we not only comprehend their value, but discern the path pursued by the national idea—then the idea of the age—personified in the great Florentine, in order to escape from the labyrinth of contradictions in which it was involved.

Italy had become incapable of a religious reformation similar to that accomplished in Germany. Instead of springing towards God, as Savonarola had predicted ; instead of seeking strength in a new conception of faith, she aimed at a re-composition of the idea of the State and the motherland. She saw in the sacrifice of all to the universal good the only possible way of political and moral redemption. The unity of the regenerated country would have inevitably led to the re-establishment of morality, would have re-kindled faith in public and private virtue, and discovered a method of sanctifying the purpose of life. This idea, vaguely and feebly felt by many, was the ruling thought of Machiavelli, the shrine upon which he offered up his entire existence. His dying eyes beheld the spectacle of Italy's ruin. Afterwards his great thought remained a dream, and he was therefore the least understood and most calumniated personality that history has known.

At the present day, when Italy's political redemption has begun, and the nation is constituted according to the prophecies of Machiavelli, the moment has at last come for justice to be done to him.

FINIS.

APPENDIX.



APPENDIX.

DOCUMENT I.

LETTERS OF THE NINE OF THE MILITIA.

I.

To the Vicar of Pescia, Berto da Filicaia.—2nd June, 1507.¹

DON Giliberto spagnolo, nostro conestabole, ci scripse per una sua lectera, come el Papa da Fordigla da Uzano, havendo abbassato dopo certe parole uno spiede per darli, et lui defendendosi colla spada, et correndo ad quel romore uno suo garzone, feri decto Papa; donde noi ti commettemo, facessi d' averlo nelle mani. Venne di poi hieri al magistrato nostro un fratello del Papa, et ci ha referito questo caso al contrario, et dice in sustanza che el Papa fu assaltato dal conestabole et dal suo garzone; et facendoci intendere come decto garzone era in Firenze, parendoci approposito, infino che noi intendessino bene la cosa, di haverlo nelle mani, lo facemo pigliare. Et desiderando hora intendere la verità del caso, ti scriviamo la presente, et voliamo che tu intenda quello che dice l' una parte et l' altra, et che tu examini dipoi e' testimoni che n' allegano, et veggha con ogni debita diligentia d' intendere la verità di questo caso; et intesola, ci manderai per iscriptura tutto quello ne harai ritratto et quanto più presto potrai.

Manderaci le listre de' disubbidienti nell' ultimam ostra, et serberatene copia, et da decti disubbidienti trarrai la pena di 20 soldi per ciascuno; et così finira' di risquotere da quelli disubbidienti che ti lasciò l' antecessore tuo, et ci farai rimettere e' danari riscossi infino ad qui.

2.

To Agnolo da Ceterna.—31st July, 1507.²

Noi intendiamo quello che tu ci advisi per la tua de' 28; et circha alli

¹ "Florence Archives," cl. xiii. dist. 2, n. 159, f. 82t. Machiavelli's Autograph.

² Ibid., cl. xiii. dist. 2, n. 159, f. 118t. Machiavelli's Autograph.

accordi che tu hai facti costà, per le questione che vi sono nate. Te ne commendiamo assai, et così seguirai per lo advenire; et quando non potessi comporre alcuna cosa, ce ne adviserai, perchè sopra ad ogni altra cosa desideriamo che cotesti nostri stieno uniti et in pace. Quanto ad Andrea del Bororo preso per condannagione dal podestà del Monte, scriviamo al podestà che lo rilaxi, perchè presupponiamo che tu dica el vero, che fussi condannato avanti che tu li dessi l' armi. Et però farai fede per via di testimoni á decto podestà, del dì che tu li desti le armi, et guarderai di dire la verità, acciò che non potessi accusarti di fraude, perchè l' ordine nostro lo fa securo delle condannagioni che li haveva dal dì che prese le armi indreto. Et quanto ad quello che tu desideri d' intendere come ti habbi ad governare, ti significhiamo che gli scripti non hanno altro privilegio, se non che sono securi dalle condannagioni vecchie, et possono portare l' armi. In tucte l' altre cose eglino àno ad essere tractati da' rectori et da ogni altro magistrato come se non fussino scripti.

Dispiaceci che sieno adoperati da' rectori ad fare le executioni; et però quanto adpartiene ad te, lo prohibirai loro per parte nostra, et noi anche ne advertiremo i rectori.

3.

To Giovancho de' Medici, potestà di Prato.—3rd November, 1507.¹

Havendoci facto constare et bene certificato, Antonio di Zanobi del Papa, trombetto che fu di don Michele, havere impegnato una sua trombeta per dua ducati d' oro per li sua servitii, et parendoci ragionevole che si vaglia sopra la roba di decto don Michele, voliamo che del cavallo morello che è di don Michele, el quale detto trombetto ti ha facto staggire in mano, tu facci una delle dua cose, o che tu lo conegni a decto trombetto per stima, faccendoti pagare indreto quello più fussi stimato da due ducati in su, o veramente tu lo facci vendere allo incanto. Et del retracto ne darai dua ducati d' oro ad decto Antonio trombetto, et el restante serberai appresso di te per satisfare ad delli altri creditori di don Michele: et ad noi darai adviso di quello harai facto. *Vale.*

DOCUMENT II.

LETTER OF THE TEN TO GIOVAN BATTISTA BARTOLINI.
27th November, 1507.²

Havendo noi inteso hieri per la tua de' 24 et per una del commissario di Libbrafacta in conformità della tua, come el Volterrano fu tagliato ad pezi in casa quelli della Chiostra, poi che fu conducto prigione in Pisa; ci dette assai dispiacere tale caso, sì perchè noi amavamo el Volterrano,

¹ "Florence Archives," cl. xiii. dist. 2, n. 159, f. 160. Machiavelli's Autograph.

² Ibid., cl. dist. 3, n. 121, f. 88t. Machiavelli's Autograph.

sì perchè e' ci dispiacque el modo della morte sua, parendoci apto crudele et non conforme a' buoni tractamenti facti da noi alli prigionieri che de' Pisani habbiamo et habbiamo hauto sempre in mano. Et perchè ogni huomo conosca che come noi non siamo per incrudelire quanto e' nostri nemici, così non siamo per lasciare impunte le crudeltà loro, facemo questa mattina impiccare alle finestre del palazzo del Capitano nostro, Giovanni Orlandi et Miniato del Seppia. Diamoti questo avviso ad ciò lo pubblici, et che s'intenda in Pisa come e' loro cittadini non sono stati morti da noi, ma da la crudeltà che è stata usata contro a' nostri; et che l'intendino, poichè li usono male la nostra humanità, ch' e' si diventerà della natura loro.

DOCUMENT III.

LETTER OF THE CONFALONIER PIETRO SODERINI TO MACHIAVELLI.
FIRENZE, 27th June, 1510.¹

Niccolò carissimo, etc. Ci è parso farvi questi versi, per allargare più il [tem]po del signor Mar. Antonio,² il quale (come sapete) finì la condotta sua a dì xv di maggio; et essendo stato rafferma, non ha voluto accettare, ma voleva crescere in condotta o in titolo: il che non è stato consentito, per non parere tempo adesso nè a l' una nè a l' altra cosa. Onde havendo lui forse qualche practica, existimando fare meglio e' facti suoi, dixè qua a noi, essersi acconcio con il Re de' Romani, ma che haveva tempo ad ratificare tucto il mese di giugno presente; et domandò qui uno mese di tempo ad levarsi, et così li furono conceduti li alloggiamenti gratis. Doppo il quale tempo si ritirò in quello di Luccha, in sulla campagna; et pare sia stato alloggiato in uno castagneto. Hora, da due giorni in qua, si è levato voce, per lettere di Roma, lui essere acconcio colla Chiesa, "et che debbi fare cinquecento fanti, et altri cinquecento se ne truova facti a Roma, sotto due connestaboli; et si dice si congiungeranno con lui. Ove si habbi ad andare et quello si habbi ad fare non s'intende dicerto. Alcuni dicono, per la guardia di Bologna; alcuni altri per andare contro al Duca o ad Vinegia in favore de' Vinitiani. Puossi ancora dubitare che queste cose non si faccino per li affari di Genova; perchè si dice quella terra essere molto sospesa et sublevata, dopo la morte di messer Gian Luigi."³ Anchora è da considerare che "a Serazana si sono murati intorno a' fossi; dove si crede si sieno spesi quindici o 20 mila ducati; et vi è una forteza inexpugnabile. Et se detti fossi et fortificatione è fatta per ordine de' Re, è da dubitare manco; ma se fussi facto per ordine de' Genovesi, è d' averne gran suspitione; perchè quello è uno ricetta inexpugnabile, et una porta da tenere il passo della Lombardia ad la Toscana, et havendo ad le spalle quali si vede che favoriscono tucte queste actioni et moti."

¹ " Carte del Machiavelli," cassetta iv. n. 111.

² Marcantonio Colonna.

³ The passages between quotation marks are deciphered by Machiavelli.

Ci è parso significarvelo, "perchè ne advertiate Monsignore Aubertet, al quale di queste cose di Serezana facemo parlare più mesi sono d' Alexandro. Et ci pare questa cosa sia neglecta et straccurata. Recordateglielo per parte nostra et come cosa importantissima : che se v' entrassi messer Ottaviano Fregoso, non ne lo caverebbono per frecta." Et vedete di porgere queste cose in maniera "che noi non ne riportiamo carico con altri," come spesso suole intervenire. Et quando "conoscessi che fussi per risultarne carico d' altri, o le tacete o le fate interdere come da voi. Non mancate di ricordarli che tenghino bene le mani in capo a' Svizeri, et che intractenghino lo 'mperadore." Circa alle altre parte harete lettere dal publico ; et a noi non occorre dire altro. *Bene valete.*

Ex Palatio Florentino, die xxx iunii 1510, raptim.

PETRUS DE SODERINIS,

Vexillifer iustitiae perpetuus Populi Florentini.

*Amico nostro carissimo [Nicolao]
Machiavello man[datario] flo-
rentino apud Christianissi-
mam [Maiesta]tem etc. [In
cort]e del Re Christianissimo.*

DOCUMENT IV.

AUTOGRAPH NOTES BY CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN, WRITTEN ON THE MARGINS OF A FRENCH TRANSLATION OF MACHIAVELLI'S "PRINCE."¹

Il n'y a point d'entreprise plus difficile, plus douteuse, ni plus dangereuse, que celle de vouloir introduire de nouvelles Loix. Parce que l'Auteur a pour ennemis tous ceux, qui se trouvant bien des anciennes, et pour tièdes défenseurs ceux même à qui les nouvelles tourneroient à profit. Et cete tièdeur vient en partie de la peur qu'ils ont de leurs adversaires, . . . en partie de l'incrédulité des hommes qui n'ont jamais bonne opinion des nouveaux établissemens, qu'après en avoir fait une longue expérience (Chap. VI.).

Il est besoin . . . de voir, si ces Législateurs se soutiennent d'eux mêmes, où s'ils dépendent d'autrui, c'est-à-dire, si pour conduire leur entreprise, il faut qu'ils prient, et en ce cas ils échouent toujours : ou s'il peuvent se faire obéir par force, et pour lors ils ne manquent presque jamais de réussir. De là

Cela est vrai.

Que tout ceci est bien dit.

Il on quelque raison.

Ah que cela est bien dit.

¹ We have already spoken of this translation in our text, and the following are the most important annotations made by the Swedish Queen.

vient, que tous le Princes, que j'ai nommés, ont vaincu aiant les armées à la main, et ont péri étant désarmés (Ibid.).

Il est aisé de leur persuader¹ une chose, mais il est difficile de les entretenir dans cete persuasion. Il faut donc metre si bon ordre, que lors qu'ils ne croient plus, on leur puisse faire croire par force. Moïse, Cyrus, Tesée et Romulus, n'eussent jamais pû faire observer longtems leurs Loix, s'ils eussent été désarmés (Ibid.).

Quiconque lira la Bible de sens rassis, dit Machiavel . . . verra que Moïse, pour rendre ses loix inviolables, fut forcé de faire mourir une infinité d'hommes qui par envie s'oposaient à ses desseins (Ibid, in note).

Et occidat unusquisque fratrem et amicum et proximum suum (Ibid., in note).

Ces sortes de gens rencontrent d'abord de grans obstacles, et même de grans dangers sur leur route, et il leur faut un grand courage pour les surmonter. Mais aussi quand ils l'ont fait, et qu'ils commencent d'être en vénération par la mort de leurs envieux, ils deviennent puissans, hureux et respectés (Ibid.).

A ces grans exemples, j'en veux ajouter un moindre. . . . C'est celui d'Hiéron, qui de particulier devint Prince de Siracuse, sans en devoir autre chose à la Fortune que l'occasion (Ibid.).

Les Ecrivains, qui ont parlé de lui,² disent, que, dans sa fortune privée, il ne lui manquoit rien pour regner qu'un Roiaume (Ibid.).

Il quitta ses anciens amis, e ten fit de nouveaux, et après qu'il se fut fait des amis et des soldats entièrement dévoués à lui, il lui fut aisé de batir sur ces fondemens. Si bien qu'il eut beaucoup de peine à aquérir, mais peu à conserver (Ibid.).

Comme ceux qui de Particuliers deviennent Princes seulement par bonheur, ont peu de peine à le devenir, ils en ont beaucoup à se maintenir.

La force est l'unique segret de faire tout reusir.

S'est l'unique segret.

On ne peut faire croire les gens par force, mais on peut les forcer d'en faire le semblent et c'est assé.

C'est là le gran miracle de la religion christienne.

C'estoit un malheur.

Que terrible commandement.

Tout cela est infalible.

Il faut savoir thrionfer de l'envie sen faire mourir les envieux. Ce seroit leur faire trop d'honneur.

Cet lui devoir beaucoup.

Cet un gran et beau defaux.

Ce de quoi ie ne le louerai pas.

Il est bien fait de faire des nouveaux amis sen faire tort aux anciens.

C'est la difficulté.

¹ The people.

² Ierone.

. . . Or ces Princes sont ceux, à qui un Etat est donné, ou pour de l'argent ou en pure grace, tels qu'étoient ceux, que fit Darius pour sa sûreté, et pour sa gloire, en divers endroits de la Grèce et de l'Hellespont; et ces Empereurs, qui de Particuliers parvenoient à l'Empire par la faveur des soldats corrompus. Ceux-cy ne se maintiennent que par la volonté et la fortune de ceux, qui les ont agrandis (Chap. VII).

Si ce n'est pas un homme de grand esprit, comment saura-t-il commander, ayant toujours vécu dans une fortune privée (Ibid.).

Il en est des Etats, qui naissent tout à coup, comme de toutes les autres choses, qui naissent et qui croissent subitement. Ils ne peuvent avoir de si fortes racines . . . que la première adversité ne les ruine, si ceux qui sont devenus subitement Princes de la manière que j'ai dit ne sont assés habiles, pour trouver d'abord les moyens de conserver ce que la fortune leur a mis entre les mains (Ibid.).

Je veux rapporter deux exemples . . . L'un est de François Sforce, qui d'homme privé devint Duc de Milan par sa grande habileté, et conserva sans peine, ce qui lui en avoit tant coûté à aquerir. L'autre est de César Borgia, . . . qui aquit un Etat par la fortune de son Père, et le perdit aussi tôt que son Père fut mort, quoqu'il eût fait tout ce qu'un homme habile et prudent devoit faire pour s'enraciner dans un Etat, qu'il tenoit de la fortune d'autrui. Car celui, qui n'a pas jeté les fondemens, avant que d'être Prince, y peut suppléer par une grande adresse, après l'être devenu (Ibid.).

Il jugea¹ si bien des intentions de la France, qu'il résolut de ne plus dépendre de la Fortune, ni des armes d'autrui (Ibid.).

Mais après qu'il eut rétabli ses affaires, bien loin de se fier, ni à eux, ni aux autres étrangers, à la discrétion de qui il ne vouloit plus être, il mit tout son esprit à les tromper (Ibid.).

On peut pour la gloire donner les Etats mais on les donne guere pour sa seureté, et cest y pourvoir que de le donner.

Ils n'estoit pas touiour corrompus.

Cela n'est pas seur.

Il est san doute asse difficile.

Tout cela est vrai.

Il vaut mieux dire asse heureux. On est touiour habile pourveu qu'on soit heureux.

Habilité et la fortune doivent estre d'accort ou on ne fait rien qui vaille.

Cet exemple prouve ce qui a esté dit icy desus.

Sans la fortune on ne fait rien qui vaille.

Ce l'unique parti que doit prendre tout homme qui a de l'esprit et du coeur.

Le parti qu'il prist estoit scelerat il y a des voyes plus nobles et plus seures pour venir à bout de se passer d'autrui.

¹ César Borgia.

Nec unquam satis fida potentia ubi nimia est, dit Tacite (Ibid., note).

Il s'avisa, un matin,¹ de faire pourfendre Remiro, et de faire exposer sur la place de Cesene les pièces de son corps, . . . pour montrer au peuple que les cruautés commises ne venoient point de lui, mais du naturel violent de son Ministre. Ce qui en éfet surprit, et contenta tout ensemble les Esprits (Ibid.).

C'est l'ordinaire des Princes de sacrifier tôt ou tard les instruments de leur cruauté (Ibid., note).

Comme il avoit à craindre, qu'un nouveau Pape ne voulût lui ôter ce qu'Alexandre lui avoit donné, il tâcha d'y obvier par quatre moïens 1 en exterminant toute la race des Seigneurs, . . . 4 en se rendant si grand Seigneur avant que le Pape mourût, qu'il pût de lui même résister à un premier assaut (Ibid.).

Il y a du danger à laisser la vie à ceux que l'on a dépouillés. *Periculum ex misericordia* . . . (Ibid., note).

Comme il fût arrivé sans doute l'année même qu' Alexandre mourut, il devenoit si puissant et si accrédité, qu'il eût pû se soutenir lui même, sans dépendre nullement d'autrui (Ibid.).

Or il étoit si brave et si habile à connoître, quand il falloit gagner ou ruiner les hommes : et les fondemens qu'il avoit jetés en si peu des tems étoient si bons, que, s'il eût été en santé ou qu'il n'eût pas eu deux puissantes armées à dos il eût surmonté toutes les difficultés (Ibid.).

Bien que les Baglioni, les Vitelli et les Ursins fussent venus à Rome, ils n'y purent rien faire contre lui, tout moribond qu'il étoit. Et s'il ne pût pas faire élire le Pape celui qu'il vouloit, du moins il fit exclure ceux qu'il ne vouloit pas (Ibid.).

Tout cela bien considéré, je ne sai que reprendre dans le conduite du Duc (Ibid.).

Ayant un grana courage et de grans desseins, il ne se pouvoit pas gouverner autrement. Car ses projets n'ont échoué que par sa maladie et par la brièveté du Pontificat d'Alexandre. C'est pourquoi, le nouveau Prince, qui veut s'assurer de ses ennemis, se faire des amis, vaincre par la force ou

¹ Caesar Borgia.

Nunquam fida nisi nimia.

Action indigne.

Meschante maxime, de contenter le peuple par le sacrifice des ministres.

Mechante maxime.

Le dernier estoit le plus seur.

Cette ydre ne s'esteint iamais.

C'est l'unique regret quant il ne suffit pas rien ne suffit.

Grandes qualites.

Je n'en doute pas.

C'estoit bien assé pour un moribond.

Sa mechanceté et sa cruauté, tout le reste estoit admirable.

Il ny a poin de grandeur ny de fortune qui merite d'estre acheté aux prix des crimes, et on n'est jamais ny

par la ruse, être aimé et craint des peuples, respecté et obéi des soldats se défaire de ceux qui peuvent ou qui doivent lui nuire, introduire de nouveaux usages, être grave et sévère, magnanime et libéral, détruire une milice infidèle et en faire une à sa mode, entretenir l'amitié et l'estime des Princes, . . . celui là, dis-je, ne sauroit trouver des exemples plus récents que les actions du Valentinois. Tout ce qu'on lui peut reprocher est les mauvais choix qu'il fit en la personne de Jules II. Car s'il ne pouvoit pas faire un Pape, à sa mode, il étoit maître de l'exclusion de tous ceux qu'il ne vouloit point. Or il ne devoit jamais consentir à l'exaltation des Cardinaux, qu'il avoit offensés, ou qui, devenant Papes, avoient lieu de le craindre (Ibid.).

Tant se trompent ceux, qui croient que les bienfaits nouveaux font oublier aux Grans les anciennes offenses (Ibid.).

Les bienfaits ne pénètrent jamais si avant que les injures, parce que la reconnaissance se fait à nos dépens, et la vengeance aux dépens des ceux que nous haïssons. Tanto proclivius est injuriæ quam beneficio vicem exsolvere, quia gratia oneri, ultio in quaestu habetur (Ibid.).

Agatoclès, sicilien . . . fut scélérat dans tous les divers Etats de sa fortune, mais toujours homme de coeur et d'esprit (Chap. VIII.).

Véritablement, on ne peut pas dire, que ce soit vertu de tuer ses Citoyens, de trahir ses Amis, d'être sans foi, sans Religion, sans humanité; moiens qui peuvent bien faire acquérir un Empire, mais non une vraie gloire. Mais si je considère l'intrépidité d'Agatoclès dans les dangers, et sa constance invincible dans les adversités, je ne vois pas, qu'il doive être estimé inférieur à pas un de plus grans Capitaines, quoique d'ailleurs il ne mérite pas de tenir rang parmi les grans hommes, vu ses cruautés horribles et mille autres crimes. On ne peut pas donc attribuer à la fortune, ni à la vertu des choses, qu'il a faites sans l'une et sans l'autre (Ibid.).

grands ny heureux a ce prix.

Les mechants jouis se rarement de leur mechancete.

Tout cela se fait mieux par la vertu que par le crime.

Machiavelli se trompe.

C'est sur tout dans l'election des Papes que Dieu se moque de la prudence humaine.

Maxime veritable.

Conter sur la reconnaissance des hommes cest conter sur un fon perdu.

Sentiment de ames basses.

On est rarement scelerat avec de l'esprit et du coeur.

Cela est bien dit et tres veritable.

Tout est très bien dit.

Au contraire tout ces crimes n'enpecherent pas quil n'eust et de vertu et de la fortune. On ne fait rien sen eux.

Il fit un festin solennel¹ où il invita Fogliani et tous les premiers de la Ville, puis à la fin du repas, . . . il ouvrit à dessin un entretien sérieux. . . . Et quand il vit son Oncle, et les autres conviés, entrer en raisonnement, il se leva en sursaut . . . et entra, avec eux, dans une chambre, où étoient cachés des soldats, qui les égorgèrent tous (Ibid.).

Il eût été aussi difficile de le détroner,² qu'Agatoclès, si au bout d'un an il ne se fût pas laissé tromper par le Valentinois, qui le prit avec les Ursins à Sinigaille, où il fut étranglé . . . (Ibid.).

Je crois, que cela vient du bon, ou mauvais usage, que l'on fait de la cruauté. On la peut appeler bien employée, s'il est jamais permis de dire, qu'un mal est un bien, quand elle ne se fait qu'une fois, et encore par nécessité de se mettre en sûreté: et qu'elle tourne enfin au bien des sujets. Elle est mal exercée, quand on l'augmente dans la suite du tems, au lieu de la faire entièrement cesser (Ibid.).

L'usurpateur d'un Etat doit faire toutes ses cruautés à la fois, pour n'avoir pas à les recommencer tous les jours et *pouvoir s'assurer et gagner les esprits par des bienfaits. Le Prince, qui fait autrement, par timidité, ou par mauvais conseil, est forcé de tenir toujours le couteau en main (Ibid.).*

Ainsi, le mal se doit faire tout à la fois, afin que ceux à qui on le fait, n'aient pas le temps de le savourer. Au contraire, les bienfaits se doivent faire peu à peu, afin qu'on les savoure mieux. Enfin, le Prince doit vivre de telle sort avec ses Sujets, que nul accident, bon ou mauvais, ne le puisse faire varier. Car quand la nécessité te presse, tu n'es plus à tems de te venger, et le bien que tu fais, ne te sert de rien, parceque l'on ne t'en sait point de gré, persuadé que l'on est que tu y es forcé (Ibid.).

Un Prince a besoin de l'amitié du peuple, faute de quoi il n'a point de ressource dans l'adversité (Ibid.).

¹ Oliverotto da Fermo.

Mechante et indigne action.

Quel horreur.

Dieu punit le méchant par le méchant.

Cela n'est pas mal dit.

Il y a sans doute des maux qui ne se gerissent que par le sang et par le feu: en la politique comme dans la chirurgie les pitoyables chirurgins ne guérissent pas les playes il tuent les malades.

Tout ce qui se fait par timidité est mal fait.

Il se trompe.

Il faut se faire craindre et aimer cet le seul regret.

Punir et récompenser bien mais punir avec regret et récompenser avec ioye.

On peut se venger toujours.

² Oliverotto.

Et que l'on ne m'objecte point le commun proverbe, qui dit, que *de jaire fond sur le peuple, c'est bâtir sur la boie* (Ibid.).

L'affection du peuple, se perd aussi aisément qu'elle se gagne (Ibid., note).

Lors que c'est un Prince, qui sait commander, et qui ne manque point de coeur dans l'adversité, ni de ce qu'il faut pour entretenir l'esprit du peuple, il ne se trouvera jamais mal d'avoir fait fond sur son affection. D'ordinaire, les *Principautés civiles* périssent, quand il s'agit d'établir une *Domination absolue*. Car ses Princes commandent *par eux-mêmes, ou par des Magistrats*. Si c'est par autrui, le danger est plus grand, d'autant qu'ils dépendent de la volonté des Citoiens (Ibid.).

Et alors le Prince n'est plus à tems de se rendre Maître absolu, *parcequ'il ne sait à qui se fier* (Ibid.).

Alors *un chacun court, un chacun promet, un chacun veut mourir pour lui, parce que la mort est éloignée* (Ibid.).

L'expérience est d'autant-plus dangereuse, qu'on ne la peut faire qu'une fois. Ainsi, un Prince sage doit faire en sorte, que ses sujets aient besoin de lui en tout tems moiegnant quoi ils lui seront toujours fidèles (Ibid.).

Il est bon d'examiner la qualité du Prince, c'est à dire, s'il a un si grand état, qu'il puisse de lui même se soutenir dans le besoin, ou bien, s'il ne sauroit se passer de l'assistance d'autrui (Chap. X.).

Ceux-là peuvent se soutenir d'eux mêmes, qui ont assés d'hommes, ou d'argent, pour mètre une bonne armée sus pié, et donner bataille à qui que ce soit qui les vienne assaillir. Au contraire ceux-là ont toujours besoin d'autrui, qui sont *contraints de se tenir enfermés dans leurs Villes, faute de pouvoir paroître en campagne* (Ibid.).

Le villes d'Alemagne . . . *n'obéissent qu'à leur mode à l'Empereur, qu'elles ne craignent point, ni pas-un autre voisin puissant* (Ibid.).

Comme elles ont toutes de fortes murailles, de grans fossés, . . . *un chacun voit, que les sieges de ces Villes seroit long et pénible* (Ibid.).

Les choses du Monde sont si sujètes au change-

Bien dit.

Sentence d'or.

Grandes paroles et un beau raisonnement.

Cela est sujet à condition, et n'est iamaïs vrai si non quant on est le plus fort et que l'on veille l'estre.

Il raison asse bien.

Il faut ne se fier a soi mesme.

Belle parole.

Bonne maxime.

En ce monde on ne peut se passer les uns des autres. Il faut rarement se fie a personne, mais il faut souvent faire semblent de s'y fier.

Malheur a ceux qui on besoin d'autrui.

Il n'y a pas d'autre segret que celui là.

Quan cela on est perdu.

Cela est fort changé.

Elle sont venales.

Quelle place du-

ment, qu'il est presque impossible de tenir, un an durant, le siège devant une Place (Ibid.).

C'est la coutume des hommes d'aimer autant pour le bien qu'ils font, que pour celui qu'ils reçoivent (Ibid.).

Agricoia renouvelloit tous les ans les garnisons et les munitions des Places, afin qu'elles pussent soutenir un long siège (Ibid., note).

Il ne me reste plus à parler, que des Principautés Eclésiastiques, qui sont difficiles à aquerir, mais faciles à conserver, parcequ'elles sont apuies sur de vieilles coutumes des Religion, qui sont toutes si puissantes, que de quelque manière qu'on se gouverne, l'on s'y maintient toujours. Il n'y a que ces Princes, qui ont un Etat, et qui ne le défendent point; qui ont des sujets, et qui ne les gouvernent point. Il n'y a qu'eux, qui ne sont point depouillés de leurs Etats, quoiqu'ils les laissent sans défense, et qui ont des sujets, qui n'ont ni la pensée, ni le pouvoir de s'aliéner d'eux. Ce sont donc là les seules Principautés assurées et hureuses. Mais comme elles sont régies et soutenues par des causes supérieures, où l'esprit humain ne sauroit atteindre ce seroit présomption et témérité à moi d'en discourir. Néanmoins, si quelqu'un me demande, d'où vient que l'Eglise est devenue si puissante dans le Temporel, qu'un Roi de France en tremble aujourd'hui, et qu'elle l'a pu chasser de l'Italie, et ruiner les Venitiens: au lieu qu'avant le Pontificat d'Alexandre, non seulement le Pontificat d'Italie, mais même les moindres Barons et Seigneurs Italiens la craignoient peu à l'égard du Temporel; il ne me paroît pas inutile de le remémorer. . . . Avant que Charles, Roi de France, passât en Italie, cete Province étoit sous l'Empire du Pape, des Venitiens, du Roi de Naples, du Duc de Milan et des Florentins. Ces Potentats avoient deux principaux soucis, l'un d'empêcher, que les armes Etrangères n'entrasent en Italie, l'autre, que pas-un d'eux ne s'agrandît davantage (Chap. XI.).

Pour humilier le Pape, l'on se servoit des Barons Romains, qui étant partagés en deux factions, les Ursins et les Colonnes, avoient toujours les armes à

rera tant si elle est attaqué comme il faut sen estre secourue.

Il n'a pas tort.

Il y a du pour et du contre.

Plus tan.

Tout les prince d'aujourd'hui son ecclesiastiques a ce propos.

Toutte l'Italie est dans cet estat et un grande partie de l'Europe.

Peut on estre plus malheureux que le son le peuples de l'Estat ecclesiastique sous Inn. XI.

Il a raison.

Ce temps est passé.

On le feroit encore il suffiroit de vouloir.

Alexandre VI. estoit un gran Pape quoy que l'on dise.

A presen on ne craint plus ni le temporel ny le spituel.

Trop de maistres.

Ces soins estoit bien fondé.

Cela ne se pouvit à la longe.

A present on ne se sert que de lui mesme.

la main, pour vanger leurs querèles, jusque sous les yeux du Pape (Ibid.).

Une dizaine d'années, que vivoit un Pape, suflisoit à peine, pour abaisser l'une des factions. . . . Cela faisoit que les forces temporelles du Pape étoient méprisées en Italie. Il vint enfin un Alexandre VI., qui montra mieux, que tous ses Prédécesseurs ce qu'un Pape est capable de faire avec de l'argent et des armes. Témoin tout ce que j'ai dit qu'il fit par le moien du Duc de Valentinois, et de François, etc. (Ibid.).

Jules, successeur d'Alexandre, trouvant . . . un chemin ouvert aux moiens de tesauriser (*de quoi nul Pape ne s'étoit encore avisé avant Alexandre*) . . . non seulement il suivit ces traces, mais encherissent même per dessus, il se mit en tête d'acquérir Bologne, des ruiner le Vénitiens, et de chasser les François de l'Italie. Ce qui lui réussit avec d'autant plus de gloire, qu'il fit tout cela, pour agrandir l'Eglise, et non pour avancer les siens. Il laissa les Ursins et les Colonnes au même état qu'il les trouva, et bien qu'il y eût quelque sujet d'altération entre eux, néanmoins deux choses les retinrent dans le devoir, l'une la grandeur de l'Eglise qui les abaissoit, l'autre de n'avoir point de Cardinaux de leur Maison (Ibid.).

Ainsi, Léon X. a trouvé le Pontificat à un très-haut degré de puissance : et il y a lieu d'espérer, que comme Alexandre et Jules l'ont agrandi par les armes, il le rendra encore plus grand, et plus vénérable par sa bonté, et par mille autres bonnes qualités, dont il est doüe (Ibid.).

Si Machiavel estoit vivant que diroit il a present.

Il raisonne bien.

On peut douter s'il ont jamais esté plus méprisés qu'a present.

Que ne peut faire un Pape qui du savoir faire avec de l'argent et des armes.

Il fist san doute des grandes choses avec des instruments et moiens detestables.

Je n'en croi rien.

Brave Pape.

Cet la le vray devoir des Papes.

C'est le segret.

C'est les segrets.

DOCUMENT V.

TWO LETTERS OF LODOVICO MACHIAVELLI TO NICCOLÒ HIS FATHER.

I.

Adrianopoli, 14th August, 1525.¹

† Ihs, addi xiiij d'agosto 1525.

Honorando padre etc. Al passato vi s'è ischrito abastantia. E questa per dirvi chome di un chonto che io ò chon Charlo Machiavegli, non l'ài mai voluto saldare; perchè io penso andare a fare e' fatti mia. E per l' altra mia vi schrissi chome m'era restato di tutta la somma panni sette 1/2; e' quali panni, per essere un pocho ischarsi, gli arei finiti meglio qui che in Pera. E per esermi Charlo Machiavegli poco amicho, insieme chon uno Giovanbatista Nasini e co Nicolaio Lachi andavano a botea di quegli che e' sapevano che gli volevano, e dicevangli che io non n'avevo se none panni di rifiuto. E se Charlo si fusì portato chome s'avea a portare uno uomo da bene, io gli arei oggi finiti, dove io sono istato forzato a mandargli in Pera a Giovani Vernacci. Anchora non gli bastò farmi quella inguria, che e' me ne fece una altra. Perchè io volevo partire quindici giorni fa, e andare in chompagnia delle robe; e volevo, innanzi che io mi partissi, saldare detto chonto chon esso secho; e che e' mi dessi infino a ducati cento ventitrè che io ò avere da lui, per fare e' chasi mia; e mai c'è stato ordine che lui l'abi voluto saldare. E chosi restai indrieto, e qui istarò per infino a che partirà giente per in Pera; e ogni giorno che io ci starò, gli domanderò se e' vole saldare chon esso mecho. Se none, chome io sarò in Pera, io vi do la fede mi', che la prima faccienda che io farò sarà questa, che io me n'andrò al Balio, e bisognerà, se chrepassi, che e' venga lassù, o che egli ordini che io sia pagato. E farogli quello onore che e' merita. Per avviso.

A Roma o a Firenze che voi siate, priegovi che all'auta di questa mi schriviate quello che è seguito de' chasi vostri; che mi pare un gran miracholo, che da diciannove di magio in qua nonn'abi mai auto nuove de' chasi vostri, o da nessuno di chasa; chè pure c'è venuto di moltissime lettere di chostà. Per aviso.

Anchora vi priego che se di quel tristo di quel prete, se voi nonn'avete fatto nulla, che alla auta di questa voi vegiate che in qualche parte io sia vendichato di tante ingurie quante e' m'ài fate. E se e' vi ramenta bene voi mi schrivesti che io atendessi a fare bene in Levante, e voi atenderesti a stare bene a Roma, e quando questo vi riescha, che le ingiurie si potrebono vendicare. E io vi dichò che di tanta roba quanta io aveva che non era possibile fare meglio. Non so già come voi v'avrete fato voi, che istimo a chomparatione di me, che voi l'abiate fatta molto meglio. Sì che pensate se io ò animo di vendicharmi. Ma sa' mi male che le vendette che noi potremo fare chon quattro parole, e mostrare chome egli è un tristo, e per questa via chavallo di quella chiesa,

¹ "Carte del Machiavelli," cassetta v. n. 46.

vogliamo serbarci a farle chon nostro danno, e chavare dua occhi a noi per chavarne uno al chompagnio. E in voi istà ogni chosa. E mende-
simamente in sulle vostra parole, sapete che io m' ebi a ingozare quella
di Cecho de' Bardi. Ma più non voglio ragionar di questo; ma bastivi
che se io nonn' ò altre nuove, io sarò prima a Sant' Andrea che a Firenze,
e gastigerò questo tristo. Più non ne ragionerò, chè tanto l' ò schritto,
che mi dovete avere inteso. E farò più presto che voi non chredete,
perchè sarò chostì innanzi che passi mezo gennaio, se Idio mi presta
sanità. Non altro per questa. Rachomandatemi a mona Marietta; e
ditegli che per non n' avere tempo non gli ò ischritto: el simile a Ber-
nardo. Salutate quelli fanciugli per mia parte, e del chontinovo a voi
mi rachomando. Iddio di male vi guardi.

Vostro **LODOVICO MACHIAVEGLI**
in Adrianopoli.

*Honorando padre Nicholò Ma-
chiavegli, in Firenze.*

2.

Ancona, 22nd of May, 1527.¹

† Xhs, addi xxij di mago 1527.

Honorando padre ec. L' ultima mia fu di Pera. Dipoi, non vi s' è
schritto per non essere ochorso. Al presente, per dirvi, chome dua gorni
fa arrivai qui inn' Anchona, e ieri ebi una gran febre. Siamo qui stallati
e achonfinati rispetto al morbo. Vorrei subito, per questo fante ch' à
esere di ritorno, m' dicessi s' e' mia chavagli sono venduti e se à chon-
peratori per le mani: perchè qua mi truovo 7 chavagli. E avendo chon-
peratori del chavallo grande, vi richordo mi chosta ducati 110, e per
mancho non lo date. E subito date per detto fante aviso, che non baderà
niente chostì: e noi di qua non partiremo se detto fante non torna. Non
sarò più lungo per non avere tenpo, e anche non mi sentire troppo bene,
chè siamo passati da Rauga in trenta ore, dove chadevano di peste li
uomini morti per la strada. E per questo rispetto ò gran paura. Che
Idio m' aiuti. A voi senpre mi rachomando. Idio di male senpre vi
guardi. Rachomandatemi a mona Marietta, e dite che pregi Idio per
me; e salutate tutta la brigata.

Vostro **LODOVICO MACHIAVEGLI**
fuora d' Anchona.

*Al molto suo honorato padre
Nicholò Machiavegli, in
Firenze.*

¹ " Carte del Machiavelli," cassetta v. n. 22.

DOCUMENT VI.

LETTER OF MARIETTA MACHIAVELLI TO HER HUSBAND NICCOLÒ.

Firenze, Date uncertain.¹† a nome di dio a di² 24.

Carissimo Nicholo mio. Voi mi dilegate, ma non n' avete ragione, chè più rigollo arei se voi fusi qui. Voi che sapete bene chome io sto lieta quando voi no siete quagù; e tato più ora che m' è stato deto chostasù è sì gra' morbo; pesate chome io sto choteta, che e' non trovo riposo nè di nè note: questo è la letiza ch' i' ò de biabino. Però vi prego mi madiate letere u poco più speso che voi no fate, chè non ò aute se non tre. Non vi maraviglate se io non v' ò scricto, perchè e' non potouto, ch' ò auto la febre in sino a ora: no sono adirata. Per ora e babino sta bene, somigla voi, è biaco chome la neve, ma gl' à e capo che pare i veluto nero, ed è peloso chome voi, e da che somiglia voi, parmi bello; ed è visto che pare che sia stato un ano al mondo; e aperse li ochi che non era nato, e mese a romore tuta la casa. Na la babina si sete male. Ricordovi e tornare. Non altro. Idio sia co voi, e guardivi.

Nadovi farseto e dua camice e dua fazoleti e uno scugtoio, chè vi à qui queste cose.

*Vostra MARIETA
in fireze.*

Spettabili viro Nicholo di mess. Bernardo Machiavelli, in Roma.

DOCUMENT VII.

FIVE LETTERS OF NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI TO HIS NEPHEW GIOVANNI VERNACCI AT PERA.³

I.

Firenze, 4th of August, 1513.

Carissimo Giovanni. Io ti scrissi circa un mese fa, et dixiti quanto mi occorreva, et in particolari la cagione perchè non ti havevo scripto per lo addreto. Credo la harai hauta, però non la repricherò altrimenti.

Ho dipoi hauta una littera tua de' dì 26 di maggio, alla quale non mi occorre che dirti altro, se non che noi siamo tuti sani: et la Marietta fecie una bambina, la quale si morì in capo di 3 dì. Et la Marietta sta bene.

¹ Laurentian Library, Cod. Tempi, n. 57, a.c. 165. Autograph.

² There is an erasure between *di* and 24.

³ Royal Library at Parma. Autograph.

Io [ti] scripsi per altra come Lorenzo Machiavegli non si teneva satisfatto di te, et in particolare delli advisi, perchè diceva lo havevi advisato di rado et suspeso, da non cavare delle tue lettere nessuna cosa, certa. Confortoti per tanto ad scrivere ad quelli con chi tu hai ad fare, in modo chiaro, che quando eglino hanno una tua lettera, e' paia loro essere costi, in modo scriva loro particolarmente le cose. Et quanto al mandarti altro, mi ha detto che, se non sbriga cotesta faccienda in tucto et se ne reduce al netto, che non vuole intraprendere altro.

Egli è venuto costà uno Neri del Benino, cognato di Giovanni Machiavegli, al quale Giovanni ha dato panni; et però non ci è ordine che facessi con altri. Et Filippo li vuole vendere in su la mostra.

Attendi ad stare sano, et bada alle facciende, chè so che se tu starai sano et farai tuo debito, che non ti è per mancare cosa alcuna. Io sto bene del corpo, ma di tucte l'altre cose male. Et non mi resta altra speranza che Idio che mi aiuti, et in fino ad qui non mi ha adbandonato ad facto.

Raccomandami alla memoria del consolo Iuliano Lapi mille volte, et digli che io sono vivo. Et non mi resta altro. Christi ti guardi.

Addi 4 di agosto 1513.

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVEGLI, *in Firenze.*

*Domino Giovanni di Francesco
Vernacci, in Levante.*

2.

Firenze, 20th of April, 1514.¹

Carissimo Giovanni. Io ho dua tue lettere in questo ultimo, per le quali mi connecti vegga di ritrarre quelli danari della monaca dal Monte, ad che, come prima si potrà attenderò, perchè se non passa l'ottava di Pasqua, non posso attendere, per non si potere andare a munisteri. Attenderovvi poi, et del seguito te ne darò notitia.

Io vedrò con Lorenzo et con altri, se io ti potrò indirizzare faccienda alcuna, et potendosi lo intenderai.

Egli è uno artefice ricchissimo, che ha una sua figliuola un poco zoppa, ma bella per altro, buona et d'assai, et secondo li altri artefici è di buone genti, perchè ha li ufitti.² Io ho pensato che quando e' ti desse dumila fiorini contanti di suggello, et promettesseti aprirti una bottega d'arte di lana, et farviti compagno et governatore, per aventura sarebbe el bisogno tuo, pigliandola per moglie, perchè io crederei che ti avanzassi 1500 fiorini, et che con quelli et con lo aiuto del suocero tu potessi farti honore

¹ The original autograph of this letter is among the MSS. of Sir Thos. Phillipps' library, now belonging to the Rev. E. Fenwick, of Cheltenham. It is marked No. 11,017.

² Although simple artizans, this family had *official* rights, *i.e.*, its members were qualified to fill political offices in the Republic.

et bene. Io ne ho ragionato così allargo, et mi è parso scrivertene adciò che tu ci pensi, et per il primo me ne advisi, et parendoti me ne dia commissione. Cristo ti guardi.

In Firenze, addi 20 d' aprile 1514.

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVEGLI.

Potrebbe si fare che tu stessi due o tre anni ad menarla, se tu volessi stare qualche tempo di costà.

*Dno Giovanni di Fran.^{co} Vernacci,
in Pera.*

3.

*At his Country Villa, 8th of June, 1517.**

Carissimo Giovanni. Come altra volta t' ho scripto, io non voglio che tu ti maravigli se io non ti scrivo, o se io sono stato pigro ad risponderti, perchè questo non nasce perchè io ti habbia sdimenticato et che io non ti stimi, come io soglio, perchè io ti stimo più; perchè degli huomini si fa stima quanto e' vagliono, et havendo tu facto pruova d' huomo da bene et di valente, conviene che io ti ami più che io non solevo, et habbine non che altro vanagloria, havendoti io allevato, et essendo la casa mia principio di quello bene che tu hai et che tu se' per havere. Ma sendomi io ridotto a stare in villa per le adversità che io ho haute et ho, sto qualche volta uno mese che io non mi ricordo di me; sì che se io strachuro el risponderti non è maraviglia.

Io ho haute tucte le tua lettere; et piacemi intendere che tu l' abbi facto et facci bene, nè potrei averne maggiore piacere. Et quando tu sarai expedito et che tu torni, la casa mia sarà sempre al tuo piacere, come è stata per il passato, anchora che povera et sgratiata.

Bernardo et Lodovico si fanno huomini, et spero dare alla tornata tua ricapito ad qualche uno per tuo mezzo.

La Marietta et tucta la brigata sta bene. Et vorrebbe la Marietta le portassi alla tua tornata una pezza di ciambellotto tanè, et agora da Dommasco, grosse et sottile. Et dice che l' anno ad rilucere, che quelle che tu mandasti altra volta non furno buone. Xpo. ti guardi.

A dì 8 di giugno 1517.

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVEGLI *in Villa.*

*Domino Giovanni di Francesco
Vernacci, in Pera.
In Pera.*

* The original autograph of this letter is in the State Archives of Florence. Only a portion of it was published in the "Opere," and with several blunders, which we now correct.

4.

Firenze, 5th of January, 1517-18.¹

Carissimo Giovanni. Io mi maraviglo che tu mi dica per l' ultima tua non havere hauto mie lettere ; perchè 4 mesi sono ti scripsi et ti feci scrivere ad Lodovico et Bernardo, che ti chiesono non so che favole ; et dectonsi le lettere ad Alberto Canigiani.

Come io ti dixi per quella, se l'havessi hauta, tu non ti hai da maraviglare se io ti ho scripto di rado, perchè poi tu ti partisti, io ho havuto infiniti travagli, et di qualità che mi hanno condotto in termine che io posso fare poco bene ad altri, et mancho ad me. Pur non di meno, come per quella ti dixi, la casa et ciò che mi resta è al tuo piacere, perchè fuori de' miei figliuoli, io non ho huomo che io stimi quanto te.

Io credo che le cose tue sieno migliorate assai in questa stanza che tu hai facta costì ; et quando le si trovassino nel termine ho inteso, io ti consiglierei ad piglare donna, et ad piglare una per la quale tu ad cresceresti el parentado meco : et è bella et ha buona dota, et è da bene. Perhò vorrei che, havendo ad soprastare costì, o tu mi scrivessi o tu me lo facesti dire ad Alberto Canigiani, che opinione è la tua ; et havendo animo ad torne, mi alluminassi in qualche modo dello essere tuo.

Noi siamo sani et raccomandianci tucti ad te. Christo ti guardi.

A' di 5 di giennaio 1517.

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVEGLI, *in Firenze.*

Domino Giovanni de Francesco

Vernacci, in Pera.

In Pera.

5.

Firenze, 25th of January, 1517-18.²

Carissimo Giovanni. Forse 20 dì fa ti scripsi dua lettere d' un medesimo tenore, et le detti a dua persone ad ciò ne havessi almeno una ; dipoi ho la tua tenuta a dì 4 di novembre. Et duolmi infino ad l'anima che tu non habbi haute mie lettere, perchè sei mesi sono ti scripsi et feciti scrivere una lettera per ciaschuno ad questi fanciulli, et ad ciò che tu ne possa havere qualcuna, farò anche una copia di questa.

Come per più mia ti ho detto, la sorte, poi che tu partisti, mi ha facto el peggio ha possuto ; dimodochè io sono ridotto in termine da potere fare poco bene ad me, et meno ad altri. Et se io sono strascurato nel risponderti, io sono diventato così in nell' altre cose : pure, come io mi sia, et io et la casa siamo ad tuo piacere, com sono stato sempre.

Gran mercè di 'l caviale. Et la Marietta dice che alla tornata tua li porti una pezza di giambellotto tanè.

¹ " Carte del Machiavelli," cassetta i. n. 59. Autograph. Machiavelli's published works only include the second paragraph of this letter, beginning : " Come io," and ending with " quanto te."

² In the Quirinian Library at Brescia. Autograph.

Per altra ti scrissi, che quando le cose tue fussin miglorate, in nel modo che io intendo et che io mi persuado, io ti conforterei ad piglare donna ; et quando ti volgessi ad quello, ci è al presente qualche cosa per le mani che tu non potresti fare meglio ; sichè io harei caro che sopra questa parte mi rispondessi qualche cosa.

Noi stiamo tucti sani, et io son tuo.

A dì 25 di genaio 1517.

Tuo
NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI.
in Firenze.

Dno Giovànni di Francesco
Vernacci, in Pera.
In Pera.

DOCUMENT VIII.

LETTER OF FRANCESCO GUICCIARDINI TO MACHIAVELLI.

Modena, 18th of May, 1521.¹

Non havendo, Machiavello carissimo, nè tempo nè cervello da consiglarvi ; neanche sendo solito a fare tale officio senza el ducato, non voglio mancarvi di aiuto, acciò che, almanco colla reputatione, possiate condurre le vostre ardue imprese. Però vi mando a posta el presente balestriere, al quale ho imposto che venga con somma celerità, per essere cosa importantissima ; in modo ne viene che la camicia non gli toccha le anche. Nè dubito che, tra el correre et quello che dirà lui alli astanti, si crederrà per tucti voi essere gran personaggio, et el maneggio vostro di altro che di frati. Et perchè la qualità del piego grosso faccia fede a l' hoste, vi ho messo certi avvisi venuti da Tunich, de' quali vi potrete valere, o mostrandoli o tenendoli in mano, secondo che giudicherete più expediente.

Scripsi hieri a messer Gismondo, voi esser persona rarissima. Mi ha risposto, pregando lo avisi in che consista questa vostra rarità. Non mi è parso replicarli, perchè stia più sospeso, et habbia causa di osservarvi tucto. Valetevi, mentre che è il tempo, di questa reputatione. *Non enim semper pauperes habebitis vobiscum.* Avisate quando sarete expedito da quelli frati, tra' quali se mettesi la discordia, o almanco lasciassi tal seme che fussi per pullulare a qualche tempo, sarebbe la più egregia opera che mai facesti. Non la stimo però molto difficile, attesa la ambitione et malignità loro. Avisatemi, potendo venire.

In Modena, a dì 18 di maggio 1521.

Vester FRANCISCUS DE GUICCIARDINIS Gubernator.

Al [M] Niccolò Machiavelli
nuntio fiorentino ec., in
Carpi.

¹ " Carte del Machiavelli," cassetta v. n. 111.

DOCUMENT IX.

EPISTLE OF N. MACHIAVELLI ON THE METHOD OF RE-ORGANIZING
THE MILITIA.¹

Volendo V. S. intendere tucti l' interessi et ordini della Ordinanza, io non mi curerò d' essere un poco diffuso per satisfarle meglio, et repeterle quello, o in tucto o in maggior parte, che ad bocca le dissi. Io lascerò indreto el disputare se questo ordine è utile o no, et se fa per lo Stato vostro come per un altro, perchè voglio lasciare questa parte ad altri. Dirè solo, quando e' si volle ordinare, quello che fu iudicato necessario fare, et quello che io iudico bisogni fare hora, volendolo riadsummere.

Quando si disegnò ordinare questo Stato all' armi, et instruire huomini per militare ad piè, si iudicò fussi bene distinguerlo con le bandiere, et terminare le bandiere con e' termini del paese, et non con el numero delli huomini, et per questo si ordinò di collocare in ogni potesteria una bandiera, et sotto quella scrivere quelli pochi o quelli assai, secondo el numero delli huomini che si trovassino in tale potesteria. Ordinossi che la bandiera si havessi ad dare ad uno che habitassi nel castello dove faceva residenza el potestà, il che si fece sì perchè la bandiera fussi dove un cittadino stessi con el segno pubblico, sì *etiam* per levare le gare che tralle castella era per nascere, qualunque volta in una potesteria fussi più d' uno castello. Ordinoronsi connestaboli che stessino in su e' luoghi, che comandassino li huomini descripti sotto dette bandiere, dando ad qualcuno in governo più o meno bandiere, secondo le commodità del paese, et dovevogli la state ragunare sotto le bandiere, et tenerli nelli ordini una volta el mese, et el verno ogni dua mesi una volta. Havevono di stipendio e' connestaboli 9 ducati d' oro per paga, in 4 paghe l' anno, et havevono dua ducati el mese da tucte quelle potesterie che governavano, che ciascuna concorreva a decti dua ducati per rata. Et haveva ogni conestabole un cancelliere habitante nel luogo, dove stava el conestabole, el quale teneva le listre di decti huomini, et haveva uno fiorino el mese, el quale li era pagato da tucte quelle potesterie che governava el conestabole.

Disputossi se gli era meglio tenerne scripti pochi o tenerne assai. Conclusesi fussi meglio ordinarne assai, perchè li assai servivono ad riputatione, et in loro era el piccolo numero et el buono, el quale non si poteva trarre de' pochi, et la spesa non era di più che d' arme et di qualche conestabole più. Et sempre mai fu iudicato che 'l tenerne assai scripti fussi bene et non male, et ad volersene valere fussi necessario haverne assai. Et intra l' altre ragioni ci è questa: tucti e' paesi o la maggior parte dove sono li scripti, sono paesi di confini: per tanto li huomini scripti havevono ad difendere el paese che gli habitavano o quello d' altri. Nel primo caso si giudicava tucti li scripti di quelli luoghi essere buoni et potervisi adoperare, et quanti più vene fussi scripti tanto meglio fussi; ma nel secondo caso, quando e' si havessi ad ire ad difendere la casa d' altri, allhora non levare tucti li scripti, ma torre

¹ " Carte del Machiavelli," cassetta i. n. 63. Autograph.

quelli che fussino più cappati et più apti, et el resto lasciare ad casa, e' quali servissino per respecto in ogni bisogno che fussi per nascere. Et però si ordinò, che ogni conestabole di tucti li scripti sua facessi tre cappate, el primo terzo de' migliori, l'altro de' secondi meglio, el terzo del restante. Et quando havevono ad levare fanti, toglìeno di quello meglio, et così havendo el numero grosso, si valieno di quello haveno di bisogno, et facilmente, tanto che infino ad hoggi se ne era ordinato 55 bandiere, et tucta via si pensava di adlescere el numero; in modo che per la esperienza ne ho vista, se io havessi a dire e' difecti della Ordinanza passata, io direi solo questi due cioè: che fussino li scripti stati pochi et non bene armati. Et chi dice di ridurla ad poco numero, dice di volere dare briga ad sè et ad altri senza fructo. Le ragioni che costoro che la vogliono ridurre ad minor numero son queste: Et prima e' dicono che, togliendone meno, e' si può torre quelli che vengono volentieri, puossi fare con minore spesa, possonsi meglio soddisfare, possonsi torre e' migliori, et aggravonsi meno e' paesi nonne scrivendo tanti; nè credo che possino allegare altre ragioni che queste. Ad che io rispondo, et prima quanto al venire volentieri: se voi volessi torre chi al tucto non può o non vuole venire, che la sarebbe una pazia; et così se voi volessi scrivere solamente quelli che vogliono venire, voi non adgiugneresti ad 2 mila in tucto el paese vostro. Et però bisogna cappare quelli che altri vuole; di poi ad farli stare contenti, non bisogna nè tucti preghi nè tucta forza, ma quella autorità et reverentia che ha ad havere el principe ne' subditi sua; di che ne nasce che coloro che, essendo domandati se volessino essere soldati, direbbono di no, sendo richiesti, vengono senza ricusare; in modo che ad levarli poi per ire alle factioni, quelli che sono lasciati indreto l'hanno per male; donde io concludo, che tanta volontà troverrete voi in trentamila che in sei mila. Ma quanto alla spesa, et a poterli meglio soddisfare, non ci è altra spesa che di qualche connestabole più et delle armi, la quale spesa è molto piccola, perchè un connestabole costa quanto uno huomo d'arme, et dell'armi basta dare loro solamente lance, che è una favola mantenerle loro, perchè l'altre armi si possono tenerle in munitioni, et darle loro a tempi, et metterle loro in conto. Et se voi disegnassi pagarli, stando ad casa, o fare loro exentione, nel primo caso, ciò che voi disegnassi di dare, *etiam* ad uno numero piccolo, sarebbe gittato via et spesa grave, perchè la intera paga non sareste per dare loro; dando loro tre o 4 ducati l'anno per uno, questo sarebbe spesa grossa ad voi, et ad loro sì poca, che non li farebbe nè più ubbidienti nè più amorevoli nè più fermi ad casa. Quanto al farli exenti, come voi entrate qui, voi fate confusione, perchè li scripti nel distrecto non potete voi fare exenti, per li capituli havete co' distrectuali; se voi facessi exenti quelli del contado et non quelli del distrecto, farebbe disordine; et però bisogna pensare ad altro benifitio che ad pagarli, o ad exentione. Et se pure l'exentione si hanno ad fare, riserbarle quando, con qualche opera virtuosa, e' se l'havessino guadagnata: alhora gli altri harebbono pazienza. Et poi sempre fa bene tenere l'uomini in speranza, et havere che promettere loro, quando e' si ha

¹ The word *allegano*, self, understood here.

bisogno di loro. E così concludo che, per spendere meno o per satisfarli meglio, non bisogna torne meno; et le satisfactioni che si ha ad fare loro, è farli riguardare da' rectori et da' magistrati di Firenze, che non sieno assassinati. Quanto ad poterli terre migliori, togliendone minore numero, dico che o voi vorrete torre ad punto quelli che sono stati soldati, et in questo caso voi non vene varrete; perchè come e' sentiranno sonare un tamburo, egli anderanno via, et così voi crederesti havere 6 mila fanti, et voi nonne haresti nessuno; o voi vorrete torre di quelli che ad occhio vi paiono più apti; in questo caso, quando voi vedessi tucte l' Ordinanza vostre, voi non saperresti quale vi lasciare, sendo tucti giovani et di buona presenza, et crederesti torre e' migliori et voi torresti e' più cattivi. Et altrimenti questa electione de' migliori non si può fare, perchè el fante si iudica o dalla presenza o dall' opere: altra misura non ci è. Quanto allo aggravare meno e' paesi, io dico che questo non adgrava e' paesi, anzi li rileva, et per conto della securtà et per conto della unione, per le ragioni che io vi dixi ad bocca; nè può dare graveza ad chi ha descripti in casa, non sene togliendo più che uno huomo per casa, et lasciando indreto quelli che sono soli, il che si può fare per essere el paese vostro copiosissimo di huomini.

DOCUMENT X.

TWO SONNETS OF NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI.¹

1.

*Niccolò Machiavelli ad M. Bernardo suo padre
In uilla a S^o Cascano.²*

Costor uiuute sono vn mese o piuue
a noce a fichi a faue a carne seccha,
tal ch' ella fia malitia et non cilecca
el far si lunga stanza costà sue.

¹ Miscellaneous Codex in the Vatican, f. 673 and 674. Though not autographic, the writing is certainly of the sixteenth century, and perhaps of its earlier half. The first sonnet is unedited, and the second has some remarkable variations from the published text, which we indicate in the footnotes. We faithfully preserve the original spelling.

² This Sonnet is not easy to understand, and in some places most obscure. Machiavelli addresses it to his father, Bernardo, in the country, who had sent him a goose, and seems to have urged him to care for his brothers, and for one of them in particular, since all lead a very frugal life at the villa. They—the brothers—so begins the Sonnet, have existed up there for more than a month on nothing but nuts, figs, beans, and bacon, and thus it would be a real injury to them and no joke (*malitia et non cilecca*) to stay longer there. Even as the ox of Fiesolo looks down on the Arno and licks his chops in vain with desire to drink from it, so they look on the eggs sold by the peasant-wife (*la trecca*), on the butcher's mutton and beef. But in order that they may not go on living up there only on salt meat, and thus starve the worms (*marmegge*) which are bred in that meat, I will speak to Daniello, who, perhaps, may be

Come 'l bue fiesolano guarda a l'angùe
 Arno, assetato, e' mocci se ne leccha ;
 cosí fanno ei de l'uoua che ha la treccha,
 et col becchaio del castrone e del bue.
 Ma, per non fare afamar le marmegge,
 Noi farèn motto drieto a daniello [?],
 che forse già u' è qualcosa che legge ;
 Perché, mangando sol pane et coltello,
 fatti habián becchi che paion d' acegge,
 et a pena tegrán gl' occhj a sportello.
 Dite ad quel mio fratello
 che uenga ad trionfar con esso noj
 l' ocha ch' havemo gouedí da uoi.
 Al fin del guoco poj
 Messer Bernardo mio, uoj conperrete
 Paperi et oche, et non ne mangerete.

2.

*Nicolo Machiavellj al Mg^o Guliano de' Medici,
 quando esso Nicolo era in prigione, nel xij, in sospeto.¹*

Io ho, Guliano, in gamba vn paio di geti
 et sei tratti di fune in su le spalle ;
 l' antre fatighe mia ui uo contalle
 poi che cosí si trattano e' poetj.
 Menon pidochj questi parietj,
 grossi et paffuti che paion farfalle ;
 né maj fu tanto puzo in Roncisualle,
 né lá in Sardignia tra quegli arboretj,

already reading a petition sent to him in my brother's behalf. (*Farèn motto drieto, che forse già u'è qualcosa che legge.*) It is hard to guess the meaning of these words, nor can we discover who Daniel was. So we merely offer a possible interpretation of the sense.

Eating little else than dry bread (*pane e coltello*) hunger has lengthened our jaws to the likeness of woodcocks' beaks, and our eyes are only half-open (*a sportello*).

Bid that brother of mine to come meanwhile to feast on the goose you sent us last Thursday.

At the end of the game, my Master Bernard, if things go on thus, you will buy ducks and geese, but will not eat of them.

¹ Here are the variants from the text as published by Aiazzi. Line 2, *fune* : corda. 3, *antre fatighe mia ui uo* : altre miserie mie non vo'. 4, *poi che* : perchè. e' : i. 5, *menon* : menan. *questi* : queste. 7, *mai fu* : fu mai. 8, *né lá in* : nè in, *tra* : fra. 9, *quanto è* : come ; *più* : sì. 10, *par proprio* : proprio par. 11, *tutto* : e tutto. 12, *si scatena* : s' incatena. *quell'* : l'. *sferra* : disferra. 13, con batter toppe chiavi, e chiavistelli. 14, grida un altro che troppo alto è da terra. 15, *fa* : fè'. 16, *è* : fu. 17, Cantando sentii dire : per voi s'ora. 18, *uadino* : vadano ; *buon' ora* : malora. 19, *la tua* : vostra ; *voglia* : volga. 20, Buon padre, e questi rei lacciul ne scioglia. Special attention is called to the variant *vadino in buon' ora* in place of *vadano in malora*, since it attenuates, without destroying the bad impression produced by the Rosini version.

Quanto è nel mio più delicato ostello ;
 con un romor che par proprio che 'n terra
 fulmini Gove tutto Mongibello.
 L'un si scatena et quell' altro si sferra,
 Combattono uscj, toppe et chiauistelli ;
 Quel' altro grida :—Troppo alto da terra !—
 Quel che mi fa più guerra
 è che dormendo, presso alla aurora,
 io cominca' a sentir :—*Pro eis ora !*
 Hor uadino in buon' hora,
 pur che la tua pietà uer me si uolga
 che al padre et al bisauo el nome tolga.
finis.

DOCUMENT XI.

MINUTES OF LETTERS, PATENTS, AND DECREES WRITTEN BY MACHIAVELLI WHEN SECRETARY TO THE FIVE PROCURATORS OF THE WALLS.¹

Yhs Maria.

Al nome di Dio et della gloriosa Vergine Maria et di Santo Giovanni Batista avvocato et protectore della nostra città. In questo libro si scriverranno le copie di tucte le lectere che gli spectabili procuratori delle mura della città di Firenze scriverranno in qualunque luogo et a qualunque persona. I quali spectabili conservatori presono l' ufficio loro adi

d' aprile² 1526, et debbono stare in officio uno anno, da cominciare decto di et da finire come segue : i nomi de' quali sono questi :

Il magnifico Ippolito di Giuliano de Medici,
 Gherardo di Bertoldo Corsini,
 Raffaello di Francesco Girolami,
 Luigi di Pietro Guicciardini,
 Dino di ³ Miniati.

¹ State Archives, Florence. With a few insignificant omissions, we give all written by Machiavelli, with notes to indicate passages by another hand. These documents fill up the gaps in Canestrini's edition of Machiavelli's writings on military topics.

² The day of the month is not indicated. Both in this and the following letter Machiavelli must have made the mistake of dating them April instead of May. This is proved by his letter of the 1st of June, and by the "Provisione" published in the "Opere" (P. M.), vol. vii. p. 360, for the formation of the magistracy, or Board of the Five Procurators of the Walls, and that was voted by the Council of the Hundred the 9th of May, 1526. The Procurators were elected on the 19th. The confusion of dates may have been caused by the circumstance that these new magistrates began to fulfil some of their duties before their formal election took place.

³ There is a gap here.

1.

*Scriptum decto di a Galeotto de Medici oratore a Roma nella
infrascritta sentenza :*

Che ci piaceva la provisione haveva fatta il papa di mandare Antonio da Sangallo in Lombardia : et come Baccio Bigio sarà tornato si ordinerà che si faccia il disegno, et si manderà subito col parere nostro ancora. Et perciò si lascerà indietro pensare per hora al quartiere di Santo Spirito, et pensereno solo al di qua d' Arno, et ci risolviamo cominciare alla Porta alla Giustitia et al Canto del Prato, o vero alla Porticciola delle Mulina. Non ci pare da toccare Sangallo, perchè havendo a muovere quivi il letto di Mugnone, et per questo offendere qu alchuno, non ci pare da farlo hora, per non dare che dire ad alcuno ; ma, cominciata che fia la opera, non si harà respecto, et chi fia tocco harà pazienza. Et come questa medesima ragione ci teneva ad non pensare per hora a' danari ; ma che ci pareva da spendere di quegli per hora che il depositario ha in mano, et di quelli che il papa volessi in questo principio sborsarsi, come ne ha oferto etc.

2.

*A di primo di giugno.
A Galeotto de Medici oratore a Roma.*

Avanti hieri ricevemo la vostra de' 28 del passato, responsiva alla nostra de' 24. Commendiamo in prima assai la diligenza vostra, et ci piace che a Nostro Signore sodisfaccino i rispetti habbiamo nel cominciare questa opera senza dare disagio ad alcuno, per non la fare odiosa prima che la sia per esperienza cognosciuta et intesa. Vero è che noi non possiamo darle altro principio che ordinare la materia infino a tanto che noi non siamo risoluti della forma che hanno ad havere questi baluardi, et del modo del collocargli ; il che non ci pare potere fare se prima non ci sono tutti questi ingegneri et altri con chi noi voglamo consigliarci. Et benchè il signore Vitello venisse hieri in Firenze, et che ci si aspetti fra duoi giorni Baccio Bigio, è necessario anchora che venga Antonio da Sangallo, del quale non habbiamo adviso alcuno. Et da poi che per commissione di Nostro Signore egli è ito veggendo le terre fortificate di Lombardia, giudichiamo essere necessitati ad aspettarlo, perchè altrimenti questa sua gita non ci porterebbe alcuna utilità. Però con reverentia ricorderete a Nostro Signore che lo solleciti. Et qui il R.^{mo} legato ha scritto a Bologna a quello governatore che, intendendo dove e' si truovi, lo solleciti allo expedirsi. Et gli rispetti che si hanno ad havere nel murare al Prato o alla Giustitia, alle parti del di là d'Arno et a' riscontri de' monti, secondo che prudentemente ricorda Nostro Signore, si haranno tutti. Et così non siamo per mancare in qualunque cosa di diligenza, quando non ci manchi il modo a farlo ; perchè il depositario ci ha facto qualche difficoltà in pagare una piccola somma gli habbiamo infino a qui tracta, et crediamo per lo advenire sia per farla

maggiore, allegando non havere danari per questo conto. Pertanto ci pare necessario che Nostro Signore ordini che noi ce ne possiamo valere. Et volendo la Sua Santità aiutarci d' alcuna cosa, sarebbe approposito hora, et farebbe molti buoni effecti. Et siamo ogni dì più di opinione che non sia bene toccare in questo principio le borse de' cittadini con nuova graveza. Perciò farete bene intendere questa parte alla Sua Santità. Et quanto al modello de' monti che Sua Santità desidera, come per altra si dixe, quando Baccio Bigio ci fia, non si perderà tempo, acciò il più presto si può se gli possa mandare, nè per noi si manchi di alcuna diligenza in tucto quello si debbe. Et perchè siamo di parere che, fatta la ricolta, si comincino i fossi per tucto di qua d' Arno, ciò è dalla parte de' tre quartieri, habbiamo scritto a tutti i podestà del nostro contado, che scrivino, popolo per popolo, quanti huomini fanno da 18 ad 50 anni, et che ne mandino nota particolare. Et si è anticipato, acciò ch' eglino habbiano tempo a fare questa descriptione appunto, et che noi possiamo, fornita la ricolta, entrare in simile opera gagliardamente.

3.

*A dì primo di giugno.
A tutti i podestà del contado di Firenze.*

Perchè noi voglamo per buona cagione havere notitia degli huomini che fa tucta cotesta tua potestaria, desideriamo che il più presto puoi, usando quanta diligenza ti è possibile, ci mandi una nota di tucti quelli che vi sono da i diciotto a' cinquanta anni; et terrai questo ordine: Manderai o per i sindachi o per i rectori de' popoli, et insieme con i tuoi messi farai fare a ciascuno, popolo per popolo, la sua lista. Et vedrai nel farla che si notino i lavoratori di terra da quegli che fanno l' altre arti; nè lascerai indietro pigionali o altri habitanti in detti popoli: et riductogli tucti in un quaderno con questa distintione, ce lo manderai. Di nuovo ti ricordiamo la diligenza, acciò che noi ci possiamo tenere sodifatti della opera tua.

Tenute et mandate a' dì 6.^a

4.

Oratori Florentino Rome, Ghaleocto de Medicis. Die VIIJ iunii.

Essendo venuto el S.^{or} Vitello in Firenze come per l' ultima nostra vi scrivemo, et non potendo molto soprastare, ci parve da pigliare consiglio da lui come ci havamo ad ghovernare in questo principio circa questa nostra muraglia, non obstante che non ci fussi Baccio Bigio nè Antonio da Sanghallo; et andamo parte di noi con lui veggendo questa parte del Prato Ognissanti, perchè stavamo in dubio se noi cominciavamo dalla Porticciola delle Mulina o dal Canto del Prato. Donde che havendo decto Signore in più giorni examinato tutto, si è risoluto che

* The beginning and end of this letter are in another hand. The portion written by Machiavelli will be indicated in a footnote.

sia bene cominciare in sul canto, allegando che quello baluardo posto in quello luogo difenderà le mulina, la bocha d' Arno et la Porta al Prato : il che non potrebbe fare quello che si cominciasse alla Porticciola. Disputossi dipoi se questo baluardo si faceva tondo (come haveva disegnato il conte Pietro Navarra) o vero affacciato. Parveli da farlo affacciato, alleghando che non potendo e baluardi defendere se medesimi, ma havendo bisogno di esser difesi dalli altri fianchi, ne seguita che quando e' sono tondi, li altri fianchi ne guardano solo uno puncto ; ma quando sono affacciati, possono tutte le faccie esser guardate. Disputamo dipoi s'egli era da farlo con le cannoniere da basso et da alto scoperte, secondo il disegno di quelli che si sono facti a Piacenza, o s' egli era da fare coperte quelle di sotto con palcho o volta che facessi piano a quelle artiglierie che havessino ad trarre di sopra. Parve a decto Signore che si faccia con l' artiglierie da basso coperte, parendoli quelli di Lombardia troppo grandi, et in quello luogo troppo sconcio, et non necessari, affermando che, quando l' artiglierie coperte hanno quelli sfogatoi che possono havere queste stanno meglio.

Disegnossi pertanto sopra decto Canto del Prato uno baluardo affacciato, che abbraccia una torre che è in su decto canto ; il quale ha le sua maggior faccie lunghe l'una lxx^{ta} braccia et le minori circa xx. Et disegnamo che le mura che sono dalla parte di verso la porta sieno grosse braccia viij, et quelle che sono di verso le mulina, per non potere esser battute, sieno braccia vj. Et dalle mura del baluardo alla torre che rimane drento, sono per tutto quelli spatii che voi potrete vedere per il disegno vi mandiamo con questa. Ha da basso iiij cannoniere, due per fianco ; et disegniamo che le sieno alte dal piano del fosso braccia iiij ; et che da decto piano le sua mura alte braccia xvij. Et che si gittino archi da (*)¹ la torre al muro nuovo ; et sopra quegli archi si faccia un palco che habbia di parapetto due braccia, tanto che l' artiglierie che fieno di sotto hanno di sfogatoio tutto quello spatio, delle xvij braccia che sono alte le mura, che non sarà dal parapetto et dal palco mangiato. Al quale sfogatoio si aggiugne la rarità del palco, et le aperture che si faranno di verso la città per potere entrare in detto baluardo. Gl' anguli di questo baluardo come voi vedete vengono acuti, et noi sappiamo bene che questi anguli sono più deboli che i recti et che gli ottusi : nondimeno si sono fatti così, perchè a volergli fare ottusi ci bisognava entrare in maggiore largheza, et così fatti ci paiono assai forti per havere, quelli duoì maxime che possono essere battuti, dieci braccia di sodo. La torre che resta di mezzo disegniamo abbassarla infino al piano del palco, acciò che lo spatio delle artiglierie che hanno a trarre di sopra sia largo. Questo è in effecto come, secondo il consiglio del signore Vitello, ci parrebbe da farlo, di che vi se ne manda il disegno, acciò possiate mostrare tucto a nostro Signore, et intendere la opinione di Sua Santità.

Et perchè ci parve, (*)² poi che noi eravamo in quello luogo, esaminare el niodo di fortificare dalle Mulina alla Porta al Prato, mandiamo

¹ The portion between this and the corresponding asterisk lower down, is written by Machiavelli.

² The rest is written by another hand.

el disegno di tutta decta fortificatione, per il quale vedrete come si disegna abbracciare la Porta al Prato con uno baluardo chiuso, che non habbia uscita, et la porta solo serva ad entrare in quello; et per uscire della città si facci una porta di nuovo allato a decto baluardo di verso el Canto del Prato. Disegnasi quella torretta che è nel mezo, infra la Porta et il Canto, bucarla dalla parte di drento, et aprirla um poco da ogni fianco, tanto che duoi vi si possino con li archobusi maneggiare. Disegnasi fasciare le Mulina con uno muro secondo vedrete in sul disegno, facendo um poco di ricepto fra 'l muro vechio et il nuovo che tiri artiglierie per li fossi. Pare anchora da fare una piactaforma in mezo tra le Mulina et il Canto che giri da ogni banda per il fosso. Disegnasi fare il fosso large 30 braccia, seguitando el consiglio di Pietro Navarra, che danna i fossi di maggior largheza. Vero è che al signor Vitello pare che ad canto a' fossi si faccia una via largha almeno x braccia; et che la terra che si ha ad cavare del fosso, quella cioè che non si metterà dentro alle mura, per far terrapieno, si metta di là da questa via, et se ne faccia uno argine alto 3 braccia da decta via, il quale argine si spargha in modo verso li campi che non facci grotta et parapetto alli inimici. Questa via disse esser necessaria per poter girare le mura di fuori, per dare adiuto, et più spatio al fosso; et sempre, respecto all' argine, si potrà da quelli di dentro usare. Et tutte queste cose così disegnate per farsi hora e ad tempo, sono distribuite in modo che le risponderanno bene a tutte quelle cose che di là d'Arno si edificassino. Questo è tutto quello che si è col signor Vitello ragionato. Farete intendere tutto a N. Signore adciò che Sua Santità ne dica la sua opinione.

Ricevemo hieri la vostra de' iij del presente, et quanto al danaio che importa più d' ogni altra cosa, noi vi habbiamo a dire questo, come, considerato li tempi che si apparecchiano et le spese che potrieno sopravvenire, noi siamo di quelli che se questa opera si havessi ad cominciare, che consiglieremo che la si soprasedesse, pensando che non fussi bene acchozare muraglia et guerra. Ma da poi che la è con tanta demonstratione et expectatione, noi non possiamo consigliare che la si lasci indrieto. Et parrebbe che questo si potessi fare senza torre assegnamento di importanza alla guerra, entrando in imprese che si spendessi poco et si facessi demonstratione assai. Questo baluardo che si è disegnato in sul Canto del Prato non ascenderebbe alla spesa di cinquemila ducati; li quali non si hanno ad spendere tutti ad un tratto, ma in iij o in iiij mesi che penerà ad fornirsi; in modo che, cominciando ad murare questo, et dall' altra parte, facta la ricolta, tenere due o tremila contadini intorno alle mura ad cavare li fossi (come si potrà senza spesa fare), sarà la demonstratione grande et la spesa poca, nè tanta che l'abbia ad impedire le altre nostre necessità. Hora piacendo a N. S. questo modo, conviene che S. Santità ordini qui che di quelli tanti danari che habbiamo di bisogno, noi ne siamo provisti, perchè di qualunque luogo e' si habbino ad trarre, o dalla Parte ¹ o d'altrove, noi habbiamo bisogno della auctorità sua; maximamente perchè circa 1600 ducati, che avanzavano alla Parte, più settimane sono, pervennono alle mani del depositario, dal

¹ The Captains of the Guelph Party.

quale non si potrebbero senza la auctorità di quella trarre. Infine, se noi sereno provisti, noi useremo quanta sollecitudine sapremo et potremo maggiore. Ma quando, respecto alli tempi, non si possa, ce ne rappor-teremo a l' iudicio et prudentia di Sua Santità. Non essendo anchora venuto Baccio Bigio, per avanzare tempo sopra 'l disegno che desidera N. S., habbiamo imposto a Giovanfrancesco da San Ghallo cominci ad levarlo; et venuto Baccio, li accozeremo insieme et acciò che 'l sia più perfecto et possa meglio soddisfare.¹

5.

A dì 17 di giennajo 1526.

Perchè ci occorre avere bisogno di ² huomini usi a maneggiare la terra, t' imponiamo che con quanta diligentia puoi gli provvegga, et sotto uno capo che gli conduca ce li mandi, et con tale presteza che sieno rapresentati venerdì proximo, che sieno adì 4 del presente, alla porta a San Giorgio ad uno nostro commissario: il che fa' che non manchi per quanto stimi la gratia nostra. Et fa' loro intendere che saranno qui pagati da noi giorno per giorno, secondo l'opere di questi tempi. Et farai che portino il terzo vangha, il terzo zappa, et il terzo pala. Oltre a di questo comanderai a tutti i tuoi subditi che ci conduchino fra 3 dì da hoggi pure alla porta a San Giorgio una soma di stipa per casa; la quale ancora sarà pagata da noi giusto prezzo. *Bene vale.*³

DOCUMENT XII.

LETTER OF GUIDO MACHIAVELLI TO HIS FATHER NICCOLÒ.

*Firenze, 17th April, 1527.*⁴

Jhs.

Honorando Padre, salute etc. Per dare risposta alla vostra dei ij d' aprile, per la quale intendiamo voi esser sano, che Idio ne sia laudato, et a lui piaccia mantenervi.

Non vi si scripse di Totto, per non l' avere ancora riscoso; ma intendiamo dal balio, non esser ancora guarito degli ochi; ma dice, va tutta via migliorando; si che statene di buona voglia. El mulectino non s' è ancora mandato in Monte Pugliano, per non esser l' erbe ancora rimesse; ma comunque il tempo si ferma, vi si manderà a ugni modo.

¹ Here follows in Machiavelli's hand a mem. of 18 *Potesterie* and the respective number of men (50, 60, or 150) to be furnished by them according to the circular we publish.

² Blank to be filled in in the different copies of this circular, with the number of men to be furnished by each *Potesteria*, according to the Note mentioned above.

³ Here follows, still in Machiavelli's hand, a mem. of 24 *Potesterie*, or *vicariati*, which were to supply sappers and brushwood for fascines; likewise a mem. of 31 *Potesterie*, to which circulars were to be sent.

⁴ "Carte del Machiavelli," cassetta v. n.^o 21.

Per lectera vostra a mona Marietta intendemo chome havete compero così bella catena alla Baccina, che non fa mai altro che pensare a questa bella catenuza, et pregare Idio per voi, et che vi faccia tornare presto.

A' lanziginec non vi pensiamo più, perchè ci avete promesso di volere esser con esso noi, se nulla fussi. Sì che mona Marietta non à più pensiero.

Vi priegiamo ci scriviate quando i nimici facessino pensiero di venire a' danni nostri, perchè habiamo ancora di molte cose in villa : vino et olio ; benchè habiamo conducto quagiù dell' olio venti o venti tre barili ; et evi le lecta. Le qua' cose ci scrvesti, sapessimo dal Sagrino, se lui le voleva in casa, il che lui l' à acceptate. Ve ne priegamo, perchè a condurre tante bazice a Santo Cassiano, bisogna dua over tre dì di tempo.

Noi siamo tutti sani, et io mi sento benissimo, et comincerò questa Pasqua, quanto Baccio sia guarito, a sonare et cantare et fare contra punto a tre. Et se l' uno et l' altro istarà sano, spero tra un mese potere fare senza lui : ch' a Dio piaccia. Della gramatica io entro oggi a' participii ; et àmmi lecto ser Luca quasi il primo di Ovidio Metamorphoseos ; el quale vi voglio, comunche voi siate tornato, dire tutto a mente. Monna Marietta si raccomanda a voi, et vi manda 2 camicie, 2 sciugatoi, 2 berrettini, 3 paia di calcetti, et 4 fazoletti. Et vi prega torniate presto, et noi tutti insieme. Christo vi guardi, et in prosperità vi mantenga.

Di Firenze, a' dì 17 d' aprile MDXXVII.

Vostro GUIDO MACHIAVELLI, in Firenze.

*Al suo honorando padre Niccolò
Machiavegli, in Furlù. In
Furlù.*





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